The Affective Turn
Jean-François Lyotard, Gilles Deleuze and Julia Kristeva

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Abstract

This thesis examines the role of affect in the work of Jean-François Lyotard, Gilles Deleuze (including works co-authored with Félix Guattari) and Julia Kristeva. It explores the notion of affect and its place in the creation of art and the formation of subjectivity. Recent social and cultural research in affect theory locates the affective turn in the mid 1990s, developing affect as a type of excess that is contrasted with the cognitive and the discursive and lays considerable stress on the body and feeling. This thesis considers the affective turn in philosophy to have taken place in the late 1960s early 1970s. Affect in Lyotard, Deleuze and Kristeva moves beyond the notion of affect as excess and is established as that which engenders cognitive capabilities, linguistic structures as well as artistic and creative processes. This thesis stages an encounter between two different theoretical strands of affect theory: Deleuze's philosophical assessment of Spinoza's distinctive formulation of affect and Lyotard and Kristeva's revisiting of the psychoanalytic notion of affect through Freud. I propose that we can draw from their writings a definition of affect that is common to all three. I will argue throughout this thesis that the definition of affect in these three writers is the non-signifying element of an image or representation that is autonomous from but also operates alongside signification (within or beneath it) creating the new, that is new art-work and new directions in thought. It is therefore the creative element of a process that incites language and conscious thought processing by moving them in different directions; it is the driving element in a productive process of change. Affect in this definition is therefore two-fold: it is an excess within language and a process. The thesis draws attention to the significance of the correlative relationship between affect and the visual realm where images become the site of affect and the place of its production. I propose that the notion of affect establishes a mode of communication outside the limits

of language that overruns linguistic meaning and illustrates that what surfaces to consciousness has already undergone an act of interpretation. This involves a break with the idea of the image as representation, while privileging the image over language as that which is capable of maintaining affective difference. I show that affect is what incites language and gives rise to subjective as well as discursive renewal.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

In light of the recent "affective turn' in the humanities, this thesis investigates the notion of affect in the work of Jean-François Lyotard, Gilles Deleuze and Julia Kristeva, and explores its relation to artistic and creative processes. Their work on affect unfolds approximately around the same time at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. Whereas contemporary social and cultural theory locates the affective turn in the mid-1990s, this thesis proposes that in philosophy, this turn takes place at a much earlier time.[1] The revival of affect theory in the humanities has coincided with, and is largely due to, the emergent interest in Gilles Deleuze's work in this area. His return to Spinoza's distinct formulation of affect has prompted a great deal of discussion across various areas and disciplines of study. This thesis explores the notion of affect: what affect is and what affect does in the work of three writers, two of whom are better known and better associated with the "linguistic turn" and post-structuralism than they are with affect theory. The significance of Lyotard's work on affect in particular, as well as the magnitude of his writings in this area, has yet to be acknowledged to its full extent.[2] I view Lyotard and Kristeva's return to the Freudian notion of affect side by side, with that of Deleuze's Spinozist formulation, illustrating points of contact, exchange and confluence between them, as well as examining their differences. I suggest that the affective turn in recent French philosophy therefore, derives primarily from two different intellectual strands in the theoretical history of affect theory: the work of Baruch Spinoza and Sigmund Freud. Whereas Gilles Deleuze builds on

[1] See Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth's (2010) *The Affect Theory Reader*.
[2] The *Affect Theory Reader* (2010) and *The Affective Turn: Theorising the Social* (2007) are a series of essays dedicated primarily to Gilles Deleuze's work on affect. However, neither contains a single reference to Lyotard's work on the subject.

Spinoza's distinct category and conception of affect, Lyotard and Kristeva draw theirs from Freudian psychoanalysis.

The affective turn in the humanities has been thought to come about as a reaction to the allegedly holistic theories of language developed in the 'linguistic turn' that turned the whole world into language without remainder.[3] In *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010), Gregg and Seigworth claim that affect theory "attempts to turn away from the much-heralded 'linguistic turn' in the latter half of the twentieth century" (Seigworth and Gregg, 2010: 7). In my own reading of these three writers, the affective turn surfaces not so much as a turn away from "the linguistic turn" but rather as a reaction to particular readings of Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of language. All three writers revisit Saussurean linguistics and claim that his theory of language is in fact doubly constituted (see Chapter One). Their work on affect thereby remains very much engaged with the question of language, as much as what falls outside of its parameters and structure. I therefore read the 'affective turn' in Lyotard's *Discourse, Figure* (1971), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and Julia Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974) as developing from an ongoing discussion on the issues of language that simultaneously explore spheres of experience that fall outside the dominant (structuralist) paradigm of representation. Perhaps, then, it should come as no surprise that writers like Lyotard and Kristeva, associated as they are with the linguistic turn (or post-structuralism), might also be interested in what falls outside language. Their theories of affect illustrate that one often finds affect where one would not expect it. As such, there is a blurring of boundaries between the distinct intellectual movements that have been labelled as structuralism, post-structuralism, the linguistic turn and the affective turn. What has been understood as the 'affective turn' in recent

[3] This is what Frederic Jameson calls the "prison-house of language". See *The Prison-house of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism* (1974).

cultural and social theory draws on older formations of affect-related theory, including the works of Baruch Spinoza, Henri Bergson, Sigmund Freud and A.N. Whitehead, among others. Hence, this relatively new, critical and conceptual strand of intellectual thought is in fact very much indebted to various and often conflicting genealogical threads. However, these contradictions have generated rich and valuable debates on what affect is and what affect does, while also exposing a tension about the relation and differences between different emotive terms and categories. This thesis approaches the affect theory of Lyotard, Deleuze and Kristeva by examining what it calls into question; this includes the notion of language and images, as well as the nature of affect.

The growing number of scholars working within the area of affect, across a number of different disciplines, illustrates that it is a new and significant field of intellectual enquiry. Scholars in the discipline of cultural studies as well as queer studies, and a more recent turn to affect theory in the neurosciences, led by neurobiologist Antonio Damasio, are generating a formidable body of work in what was once believed to be too vague and volatile a field to merit serious study. Cultural studies in particular, have opened up the discourse of affect theory to politics, questioning whether it can be mobilised towards various political ends. In contemporary cultural theory the notion of affect is developed as a kind of excess that is contrasted with cognitive and linguistic capabilities. It is differentiated from qualified emotive categories and is frequently linked to the body and feeling. Affect theory in Lyotard, Deleuze and Kristeva moves beyond the notion of affect as excess, and instead it is determined as what elicits cognitive capabilities and linguistic structures as well as artistic and creative processes. Although they are resistant to providing a simple and stable definition, I propose that we can draw from their writings a classification that is common to all three. I will argue throughout this thesis that affect can be defined as the

non-signifying element of an image or representation that remains autonomous from but also operates within and alongside signification in a productive relationship, which results in the creation of the new, that is, new artwork and new directions in thought. Affect in all three authors is first and foremost a mode of resistance, a violence or a dissensus that gives rise to new thoughts and thereby enables a change in consciousness that leads to what they call "thinking differently". Affect is a productive destruction of a previous position and is the creative element of a process that incites language and conscious thought processing, by moving it in different directions. It is therefore the driving element in a productive process of change. Affect in this definition is two-fold, in that it is both an excess within language and a process. This thesis draws attention to the significant and correlative relationship between affect and the visual realm, where images become the site of affect and the place of its production. This entails a move away from the idea of the image as representation, while privileging the image over language as that which is capable of maintaining affective difference. I suggest that the notion of affect determines a mode of communication outside the limits of language that overruns linguistic meaning, thereby illustrating that what surfaces to consciousness has already undergone an act of interpretation.

In Chapter One, I consider the notion of affect across a number of different disciplines in its contemporary formulation. This section examines the history of affect theory, notably via the work of Spinoza and Freud, and its development in different strands of thought, paying particular attention to the sources that have influenced the work of Deleuze, Lyotard and Kristeva. I then turn to the notion of the image, in order to draw attention to what these writers take from past accounts, but also to illustrate what they are reacting to and rejecting. The chapter concludes by turning to the

language theory of Ferdinand de Saussure and Lyotard, Kristeva and Deleuze's readings of his work, which suggest his influence in their own work on affect theory.

Chapter Two discusses Lyotard's theory of affect as a consistent concern that persists throughout his writings. In the first section I address the relationship between affect and language, in particular as it is formulated in his later work. Here I consider the arguments made in *Misère de la philosophie* (2000) and *Lectures d'enfance* (1991) that deal with affect as an index located in the order of language. He claims that affect is autonomous from it and is capable of disturbing the signifying system, but is also the source of its renewal. In examining the relationship between affect and language I discuss Lyotard's understanding of writing and literature. In the second section of this chapter I turn to *Discourse, Figure* in order to address his notion of affect as a process, what he names the "figural," which he derives from Freud. The argument made here discusses affect as a question of phenomenology and aesthetics that he relates to the notion of the image and to art. Lyotard develops the argument that the image and affect are correlates, and he posits that images do not belong to representation; rather, affective bodily images are *sensed* rather than seen. The significance given to the image is that it is capable of capturing and maintaining affect as difference, while desire is given a particularly important role in the affective process as that which opens up the space in discourse in order for affects to move and circulate. Moreover, desire is reconfigured as a productive force that forms a reciprocal relation with affect and images. In the third section of this chapter, I look at Lyotard's notion of subjectivity as affective becoming, through a reading of *The Inhuman* (1991).

In Chapter Three, I examine Deleuze's theory of affect and its relation to art as well as subjective processes, also engaging with the works co-written with Félix Guattari. As mentioned previously, Deleuze derives his theory of affect from Spinoza.

In the first section of this chapter I look at his theory of affect in relation to language, writing and literature and the differences between them. Literature, for him, exposes the relationship between affect and signification as a material unravelling of (affective) events that give rise to affective becomings. In the second section of this chapter I view the relationship between affect and art (in particular, painting) through the notion of the figural that he borrows from Lyotard. The focus of this section is the relationship between art and image. Art in Deleuze is viewed as autonomous, a block of sensations that exist independently from language, the painter and the viewer. Like Lyotard (and Kristeva), Deleuze disentangles the image from its signifying properties and distinguishes between representation and the affective images of art. He emphasises art's ability to reveal the processes underlying the visual and the image and affect's capacity to open up new ways of relating to and engaging with the world. In the third section of this chapter I look at the relationship between affect and subjectivity, or becoming in relation to desire. Like Lyotard, Deleuze and Guattari reconfigure the notion of desire as positive and productive and as the force of affect. Becoming in Deleuze is based on the affective relations and connections that alter, create anew and expand the subject to become something other, and these affective relations find their force in desire. Deleuze claims that the creation of subjectivity is a creative and artistic process, and his subject, like Lyotard's, is an affective subject of desire.

Chapter 4 addresses Kristeva's understanding of affect in relation to subjective and artistic processes. Here, I align the notion of affect with Kristeva's notion of the semiotic. I examine her views on the semiotic, the symbolic and the semiotic chora primarily through *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974) and the 1980s trilogy *Powers of Horror* (1982), *Black Sun* (1989) and *Tales of Love* (1987). In the first section of this chapter I examine the relationship between the symbolic and the semiotic, thus focusing

on the relationship between language and affect. Here she develops the idea of the semiotic as an index, and I also consider her notion of the semiotic chora as that which evokes subjective and discursive renewal. I propose that the semiotic and the semiotic chora are analogous to Lyotard's affect-index and the figural, and if this is the case, it is because they both appear to derive their notions of affect from Freud. The semiotic chora is developed in line with what Freud calls affect as process. I view this argument in more detail in the second section of this chapter, where I discuss Kristeva's work on Freudian dream theory and Hegel's concept of negation. This section develops the argument that the semiotic can be considered analogous to affect precisely because she too illustrates and claims that what emerges in consciousness has already undergone a process of interpretation. In other words, she develops the semiotic chora as a process that forms an act of interpretation prior to its emergence in language. For Freud affects are meaningful and they are types of judgments (in contrast to Lacan). Kristeva's return to Freud's primary processes and the work of the unconscious, enables her also to reformulate Lacan's unconscious and redefine it as non-representational and affective. She also argues that the image is split between representation on the one hand and non-representational images on the other hand, images that maintain affective difference. I view the role of negativity in her work as that which is at the heart of aesthetic production and 'poetic rhythm'. I examine what she names the *abject* in *Powers of Horror* and *melancholy* in *Black Sun* as parts (or stages) of the process that affect entails and explore how these relate to art and subjectivity. Finally, the last section of this chapter focuses on a discussion of love and affect in *Tales of Love*. For Kristeva, love (*agape*) is what rules or organises the semiotic, while desire (*eros*) dominates and orders language. The relationship between the two is mutually productive in relation to the processes of creation.

Chapter 1: Affect in theory

What is affect? Contemporary discussions on the meaning, interpretation and status of affect rest on a rich and complex history of writing that seeks to explain affect and affective states. It is not uncommon for readers of this history to find not only that there is an overwhelming amount of writing in this area, but also that theories on affect often overlap with various other related terms and concepts such as emotion, passion, sentiment, sensation, feeling, etc. Affect is viewed as a volatile notion that is often left undefined and becomes a "sticking point," as Sara Ahmed puts it, for philosophers as well as scholars in various other disciplines (Ahmed, 2004: 4). In this chapter I shall be looking at the history of the notion of affect, in isolation from all other terms in order to differentiate it from the other concepts mentioned above. However, since in its contemporary formulation the notion in various works and disciplines still occasionally overlaps with these other terms, I will also be looking at terminology as an issue that goes with this territory. Given the focus of my thesis, my review will be limited to definitions of affect that arise from and concern art critique and aesthetic theory as well as literary theory. I focus in particular on its philosophical conceptualisation in the work of Spinoza (which Deleuze emphasises) and on the psychoanalytic work of affect theory in Freud (which prompts both Lyotard and Kristeva's turn to affect theory).

Affect in its current usage has been defined as a relation, variations of power, fluctuating intensities, as a dissensus, as a process, as a form of judgment, a violence, and as force, and as a term it is said to deal with lived experience, movement and the body. I will be considering most of these definitions in various contemporary theoretical works that have emerged in light of the affective turn which, in the humanities, is often

said to have taken place around the mid-1990s.[1] I propose instead that the affective turn in philosophy can be viewed as having taken place at a much earlier time during the late 1960s or early 1970s, as the works of Lyotard, Deleuze and Kristeva illustrate.[2] These writers claim to be interested not in what affects are but in what affects do, in particular in the context of art (and linguistic) theory. They each display resistance in their discussions on affect to providing a simple and stable definition of the term. Nonetheless, I propose that we can draw from their writings a definition of affect that is shared by all three authors. I will argue here and throughout this thesis that affect (in these three writers) is the non-signifying element of an image or representation that is autonomous to, but also operates alongside, signification (within or beneath it), thereby creating the new, i.e. new artwork and new (directions in) thought. It is the creative element of a process that incites language and conscious thought processing by moving it in different directions; it is therefore the driving element in a productive process of change. It is significant to note here that affect is placed on the side of the image and is that which does violence to signification. This is not to say that affect is itself (the sensing of) something new – a view held, for instance, by Brian Massumi (see later); rather, it is what *produces* or *creates* the new alongside the signifying elements in language. In what follows I will also be discussing the nature of affect's relationship

[1] See Patricia Clough & Jean Haley in *The Affective Turn: Theorising the Social* (2007) and Melissa Gregg & Gregory J. Seigworth in *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010).

[2] There are a number of other writers that could be added to this list (and with whom I do not deal with here) whose work indicates an early affective turn, for instance Roland Barthes' work on affect in relation to the image and photography (his development of various affective terms "the third meaning," "the obtuse" and "the punctum"), as well as his discussions on love and "the neutral". It is important to note that these writers, including some of the writers that I discuss in this thesis, are often associated more with 'the linguistic turn' rather than 'the affective turn'. Rei Terada's compelling discussion of post-structuralism and affect in *Feeling in Theory: Emotion after the 'Death of the Subject'* (2001) is relevant here, since she argues that post-structuralism (and in particular the 'death of the subject') is concomitant with the affective turn rather than opposed thereto. Her discussion on affect and emotion in the work of Derrida, Paul de Man and Deleuze provides a strong argument to this end.

with the image as well as the affective turn's relation to the linguistic turn as noted by these three writers.

Affect in Philosophy

The term 'affect' is derived from the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza (1632-77) and developed in *Ethics*, published in 1677. His approach was distinctive, beginning with his vocabulary, since he deviated from his predecessors and contemporaries' use of the term *passion* and the implications that this notion entails.[3] Affect in Spinoza's work is understood as an ontological category, since he argues that all human activity, including cognition, produces and is produced by affect. Affect in Spinoza defines not only various states of subjective life (from very basic emotions such as joy and sadness to more complex emotions such as aspiration and envy), but he also defines just about everything in terms of affective relations, since everything has the capacity to affect and be affected. To put it simply, affect accounts for the mode, state or quality of a body's relation to the world or nature. For Spinoza, then, we are constituted by our affects and we are also individuated by them, since affective composition will differ from person to person. He states, "By affect I understand affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections" (Spinoza, 1994: 154). Affect denotes the chance encounters

[3] Although derived from the Latin *passio* and Greek *pathos* by the late 12th century, the term 'passion' was tied to Christian discourse referring to the suffering of Christ and came to mean: an affliction, a suffering, passivity and "the fact or condition of being acted upon or affected by an external agency" (OED). Spinoza's turn to affect broke with the understanding of passion as a type of passivity or suffering. For him, affects are an ontological category, whereas he reserves the term 'passion' to describe particular emotions. This differentiates him from his contemporary René Descartes and his *Passions of the Soul* (1649), which was written during the winter of 1645-46. Descartes' book on the passions is a continuation of previous work and ideas that holds the dualism between mind and body intact, albeit problematically. Descartes defines the passions as: "the perceptions, sensations, or excitations of the soul which are referred to in particular and which are caused, maintained and strengthened by some movements of the spirits" (Descartes, 1989: 34). For Descartes it is the soul that thinks, while the body is defined primarily by its movement and form (and does not think). Although Descartes does not reject the passions and emphasises their beneficial role to human existence, he does understand them as an affliction that we can better control by studying and understanding them. He isolates six categories of passion that he states all the other ones stem from: wonder, love, desire, sadness, joy and hatred.

that effectuate modifications or variations produced in a body when an interaction with another body occurs and which increases or diminishes the body's power of activity. In short, one of the ways affect can be interpreted in Spinoza is by explaining it as the relations formed based on corporeal capacity (a specific body's power to act).

It is important to note that unlike Descartes, Spinoza does not separate the mind and the body but rather believes them to be the same substance. Affects are states of mind and body that are related to three feelings: pleasure, pain and desire (linked to appetite and striving). As I will show in Chapter Three, Spinoza does not differentiate strictly between affect and emotion in the same way as Deleuze. In *Ethics* he explains that it is from these three affects that all the other ones stem, while pleasure is defined as "man's transition from a state of less perfection to a state of greater perfection," and pain is noted as "man's transition from a state of greater perfection to a state of lesser perfection" (Spinoza 1994: 311). Desire, however, is what he explains as "the very essence of man insofar as his essence is conceived as determined to any action from any given affection from itself" (Spinoza, 1994: 311). For Spinoza there is no difference between appetite and desire insofar as one is conscious of that appetite. Hence, desire is defined as an appetite accompanied by a consciousness of that appetite. In contrast to Deleuze, who understands desire as unconscious (and productive), Spinoza's theory of desire relates to consciousness, a notoriously difficult and at times problematic theory in his work that I will not take up here. According to Spinoza, "affect or passion of the mind [animi pathema] is a confused idea" which can only be perceived through its affections, its effects (Spinoza, 1994: 141). As I will show, Deleuze's work on the notion of desire is reworked as the force of affect, as its organising principle that both informs and is informed by affect. It is Deleuze's recent work on affect theory that brings to our attention to Spinoza's differentiation between affect and affection. Spinoza

held that affections are states of bodies and affects are variations of power, the latter referring to signs of increasing or decreasing levels of action and the former to increasing or decreasing levels of pleasure or joy (where the body's capacity to act increases), and sad or painful affects (whereby the body's capacity to act decreases). Affect is viewed as the primary condition of a body, and in contrast to affections, they are understood as active, in that they regulate the body's variations of power to act. It is this conceptualisation of affect that has become the catalyst (following Deleuze) for many contemporary writings on affect theory to define and discuss it as a relation and as a variation of power, but also as fluctuating intensities.[4]

The specific category of affect developed by Spinoza, and its differentiation from other emotive categories, does not seem to have been preserved in philosophy until a resurgent interest in the term at the very end of the nineteenth century, which was brought about by the works of Henri Bergson and A. N. Whitehead. Bergson's work on affection showed up around the same time that affect was taken up by Freudian psychoanalysis.[5] The publication of Bergson's *Matter and Memory: Essay on the Relation of body and Spirit* (1896) came a year after Freud and Breuer's analysis of affective states in *Studies on Hysteria* (1895). Bergson's book arose out of a reaction to Théodule Ribot's *The Malady of Memory* (1881), which claims that memory is located within a particular part of the nervous system and is limited within the brain, thereby making it material in nature. Bergson suggests, on the contrary, that the spirit should not be reduced to matter and that the brain and nerves are images. He differentiates between

[4] For a political take on Spinoza's theory of affect (as relation and as "variations of power") see Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire* (2000) and *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (2004), where they develop a theory of "affective labour." Affect, as "fluctuating intensity" will be discussed later on in more detail through the work of Brian Massumi.

[5] The eighteenth century is not devoid of theories that deal with emotive categories. Rather, the focus of the Enlightenment appears (perhaps following in the steps of Descartes) to focus on the theory of passion rather than the Spinozist account of affect and affection. Whereas seventeenth-century philosophy tends to view the passions as judgements, there is a shift in the eighteenth century, beginning, with Hume that links passion to sense-perception and its quality to "impress" upon those that it affects.

two forms of memory, namely an automatic memory inscribed within the body that is non-reflective and operates through mechanical repetition, and a second memory that he argues is pure memory and registers the past (or represents the past) in the form of "image-remembrance." This latter form of memory is the memory recognised as past experience and can be contemplated but cannot be recreated in the present. Bergson links cognition to affection and privileges the body insofar that he views the body as an image (in fact, he often uses the terms body and image interchangeably) and considers the body as the only image by which perception (whether internal or external) can take place. He argues that there is one particular image that organises all other images co-centrically. This image is the one we name 'the body', which, he argues, is known extrinsically by its external surface and from within by its affections. He revises the Spinozist notion of affection by viewing it as a type of bodily image that comes from within. These images interpose themselves between the movement-image received externally and prior to its execution (in action). To explain, affections are taken as an invitation to act and have an influence over the outcome of actions. He argues that "Affections are movements begun, but not executed, the indication of a more or less useful decision, but not that constraint which precludes choice" (Bergson, 1991: 18). Bergson's definition of affection, then, relates to his understanding of the body as image. He goes on to claim that "Affection is, then, that part or aspect of the inside of our bodies which mix with the image of external bodies" (Bergson, 2002: 112). In his view, therefore, affection is that which occurs at the intersection between internal bodily images that interact with the same sort of images in external bodies. He treats these affections as repositories of knowledge and links them to the faculty of perception, arguing that "there is no perception without affection" (Bergson, 2002: 112). The affective image, then, emerges in the gap or interval that is introduced between action

and reaction. These are what he names "living images," which consciousness perceives as feeling and sensation. Affection is thought to incite activity that no longer requires consciousness, and has effects in cognition that result in "add[ing] something new to the universe and to its history" (Bergson, 1991: 17). It is precisely this particular capacity to create something new in thought processes that Deleuze, Lyotard and Kristeva associate with affect (I will be discussing this in the chapters that follow).

Alfred North Whitehead's affect theory places aesthetics and not ontology (in contrast to Spinoza) at the heart of his philosophical enquiry; yet, in *Adventures of Ideas* (1933), he claims that "the basis of experience is emotional" (Whitehead, 1967: 167). Whitehead draws on the writings of Spinoza, Bergson and William James, and he underlines the importance of affects, feelings and emotions in relation to consciousness, claiming that there is a "basic affective tone" that underlies all consciousness. Rather than beginning with the notion of affect, he starts with consciousness and traces it back to its basic affective roots, arguing that affects and emotions are the very ground upon which consciousness stands. He argues that bare sense-perception includes modes of experience that are not conscious and not even necessarily human. According to Whitehead, feelings are indistinguishable, "positive prehensions," which are what all entities use to interact with or affect one another (Whitehead, 1978: 220) Hence, the feeling indicates that one has been affected by something, and the ways in which the feeling entity has been affected (or altered) make up the content of the feeling. This is (as we shall see later) an extension of William James' theory of emotion and feeling. According to Whitehead, an entity constitutes or creates itself by feeling the other entities that have affected and informed it; this feeling is also a signal of distance (both spatially and temporally), because it feels other entities as distinct from itself. He therefore understands feeling to be a process that structures experience and

consciousness, whereby each "pulse of emotion" is a new creation of space-time and an immediate diminution of "objectification." It is often noted that Deleuze's theory of affect has been influenced by Bergson and Whitehead inasmuch as Spinoza. The philosophical history of the theory of affect (as we have seen in Bergson and Whitehead) intersects with that of the image and the notion of visuality that relates to perception (consciousness) as well as unconscious processes (featuring prominently in psychoanalytic theory). These ideas on affect in fact derive from a small passage in Aristotle that I will be looking at in the section that discusses the image and affect, but first I will turn to the psychoanalytic understanding of affect in Freud.

Affect in Psychoanalysis

The notion of affect has also been significant in the field of psychoanalysis. As I will discuss in the following chapters, Lyotard and Kristeva both derive their understandings of affect from Freud. In Freudian psychoanalysis, affect is an occurrence of pleasure and/or pain. This affective state, as Laplanche and Pontalis argue, can be "well-defined" or "vague" and "manifested in the form of a massive discharge or in the form of a general mood" (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1988: 13). In order to differentiate affect from other thought processes, Freud distinguishes between affect and representation or an idea. This is something that both Lyotard and Kristeva draw on in Freud's work, in order to distinguish a non-signifying affective register and oppose it to signifying and representational qualities in language. According to Laplanche and Pontalis, Freud illustrates that "each instinct expresses itself in terms of affect and in terms of ideas (Vorstellungen). The affect is the qualitative expression of the quantity of instinctual energy and of its fluctuations" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1988: 13). What Laplanche and Pontalis are pointing out here is that affect is the expression of an

instinct (drive), a notion that will be viewed in greater detail in Kristeva's re-working of the idea of the semiotic as an affective register. This understanding of affect as a type of fluctuating intensity is present not only in Spinoza (as we have seen) but also in more contemporary work on affect theory, which I will be discussing below.

Freud's interest and development of affect theory can be located back to his early studies on hysteria with Josef Breuer (1895). The notion of affect developed throughout his career in a number of different ways, but in its early development it was linked to fluctuations in psychic energy that are understood as being capable of disturbing and modifying thoughts as well as having a number of physical manifestations. Freud and Breuer noticed that their patients had a "surplus excitation" in the nervous system that manifested as symptoms. They associated this *excess excitation* with modifications in their patients' thoughts and "magnification and suppression of feelings" (Breuer and Freud, 1957: 49). Furthermore, they viewed hysterical symptoms as the result of an imbalance in psychical energy, which in turn was a consequence of the failure to maintain a constant "sum of excitation" in the nervous system through appropriate discharge (Breuer and Freud, 1957: 12). They observe:

> For we found to our great surprise at first, that each individual hysterical symptom immediately and permanently disappeared when we had succeeded in bringing clearly to light the memory of the event by which it was provoked and in arousing its accompanying affect, and when the patient had described that event in the greatest possible detail and had put the affect into words. Recollection without affect almost invariably produces no result (Breuer and Freud 1957: 6).

Affect here is linked to the trauma of an event. Freud and Breuer observed in hysterical patients the relationship (and the differences) between the content of memories (representations) and the affect associated with them. They argued that affect is not constituted by language; rather, it has to be put into words, since it appears to be more

of an energetic phenomenon that contributes a quantitative aspect to psychic contents (even though Freud adds that it cannot be measured). Freud states:

> I refer to the concept that in mental functions something is to be distinguished – a quota of affect or sum of excitation – which proposes all the characteristics of a quantity (although we have no means of measuring it), which is capable of increase diminution, displacement and discharge, and which is spread over the memory traces of ideas somewhat as an electric charge is spread over the surface of a body (Freud, 2001b: 60).

It is not only that Freud distinguishes between the intellectual function and the affective process, but he also understands affect here as something that leaves a trace (an excess) in representation and is accompanied by a sensation or a feeling, an "electric charge." This excess of affect is linked to Freud's theory of condensation and displacement (metaphor/metonymy, as we shall see in Kristeva) that partakes in a process of summation linked to pleasure, as well as a discharge associated with the occurrence of pain – from which communication and language arise. This discussion is resumed and elaborated in relation to his principle of inertia in a paper published in the same year.

In the "Project for a Scientific Psychology" (1895), Freud suggests that the psychical apparatus has a tendency to reduce excess psychical energy through the principles of "inertia," and he associates it with what he describes as a "flight from the stimulus" and a "discharge" (Freud, 2001d: 318). The principle of inertia in Freud explains a kind of "economy of nerve forces […] a theory of mental functioning based on quantitative considerations" (Macmillan, 1997: 408). The principle of inertia is revised as the primary principle of the nervous system, according to which neurons tend to relieve themselves of excitations (that are painful) until they return to zero degree.[6] He identifies this restoration of equilibrium as the primary function of the nervous system, but he also considers a secondary function that explains how the specific

[6] In this study, Freud and Breuer arrive at different conclusions. Breuer argues that the reflex is a simple mediator of the organism's relation with its environment, whereas Freud claims that the reflex should be understood as a complex process with both primary and secondary aims.

actions leading to drive satisfaction are selected. The secondary function forces the nervous system "to abandon its original trend to inertia (that is, to bringing the level [of quantity] to zero)" and instead to retain a certain quantity (of excitation) in order to maintain life and the capacity for specific action (Laplanche, 1988: 318). This affective process, constituting an "economy of nerve forces," is linked to his notions of pleasure and pain.[7]

When discussing the experience of pleasure or satisfaction, Freud argues that our experience of need is an effect of neurons gradually filled with cathexis, which leads to an "effort to discharge" (Freud, 2001d: 317). This gradual filling is what he names a "summation" and describes a process whereby endogenous stimuli accumulate until they become psychical disturbances that engage with the neural network. In response to this filling the naïve organism seeks first an internal change (through the expression of emotion, for instance) and then specific action in relation to the external world. He claims that infants are incapable of carrying out these actions for themselves, and need help from the outside. He writes that "In this way this path of discharge acquires a secondary function of the highest importance, that of communication, and the initial helplessness of human beings is the primal source of all moral motives" (Freud, 2001d: 318). This is precisely why André Green, in his work on Freudian affect, argues that:

> One can hardly stress too strongly this primary link between discharge through emotivity and motiricity, and the function of communication, from which language springs. Better still from now on, satisfaction will be associated with the image of the object that first aroused it and the moving image of the reflex movement that allowed its discharge (Green, 1999: 24)

[7] Freud's pleasure/pain principle appears to derive from Aristotle's definition in *Rhetoric,* in which he claims "We may lay it down that Pleasure is a movement by which the soul as a whole is consciously brought into a normal state; and that Pain is its opposite" (Aristotle, 2012: 39).

For Freud the residue of this experience of satisfaction is in fact a "wishful state" (desire). Its remainder is a "facilitation" in the neuronal network that effectuates a positive attraction (a compulsive kind) towards the mnemic image (memory) of the desired object. In turn this significantly amplifies the cathexis of perception of an actual object.[8] How does Freud, then, understand the experience of pleasure as different to the experience of pain?

The occurrence of pain is experienced as un-pleasure and is associated with an "irruption" into the psychical apparatus of excessive quantities of excitation. This is caused by an increase of cathexis that the organism seeks to rid itself of, as rapidly as possible. Where pain is caused by an external phenomenon it is the environment that is the source of the overwhelming excitation, as Breuer had argued. Pain, here, arises from perceiving (non-consciously) a hostile object that has previously been experienced as painful. Freud argues that perception has the ability to access memories which release unpleasure from the interior of the body and compares the process to sexual release. This overwhelming excitation seeks discharge and results in a strong reaction towards the hostile object; he names this a primary repression, or a "reflex defence," and a "disinclination to keeping the hostile mnemic image cathected" (Freud, 2001: 322). In order to explain this occurrence he suggests that the answer lies in the way in which the painful occurrence comes to an end, which results in the "emergence of another object in place of the hostile one: This signal of the end of pain teaches the organism biologically to seek to reproduce the state which marked the cessation of pain" (Freud, 2001d: 322). In André Green's view it is only the internal discharge, "endogeneous and

[8] See Warren F. Morris's *Emotion and Anxiety: A Philosophical Enquiry* (2006). Morris writes that, "Rather than seeking pleasure, instincts [the drives] operate to alleviate pain. And pleasure is not an instinctual goal, but rather a sensuous signifier of the alleviation of pain following instinctual gratification that restores a somatic energy hemeostasis" (Morris, 2006: 75). As we shall see in the following chapter, Lyotard, following Freud, links pleasure to the creation of new language, whereas it is pain (displacement) that is considered properly as affect.

secretory, bound up with the memory-trace of the hostile object," that is specifically affect in Freud's theory and is associated with violence, the body and defence (Green, 1999: 25-6). In other words, for Green (in a similar manner to Lyotard and Kristeva, as we shall see), only the internal discharge that relates to pain is classed specifically as affect in Freud's affective economy. The dimension of violence that he refers to is the reaction and bodily participation where affect is produced during the repetition of the bodily experience of pain. According to Green, Freud appears to be suggesting that both pain and desire are the result of a process of accumulation of endogenous stimuli of an intercellular nature. He differentiates between the two, however, arguing that whereas in pain the accumulation is rapid and excessive, desire presents an accumulation that is more measured. We can see here how affect in Freud corresponds primarily with pain (what Lyotard and Kristeva develop in terms of a displacement and violence) which at times (even at this early stage in his work) is linked to desire and at other times to the drive (instinct). However, it also important that affect in his work forms a process that Lyotard will call the "figural" and Kristeva the "semiotic chora" (linked to the unconscious).

Freud returns to the notion of affect in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), proclaiming its significance in dreams. Dream theory serves to explain how the unconscious mind operates and how dreams perform important functions for the unconscious. Freud suggests that in contrast to ideational content, affects have a more stable role and remain "unaltered" by dreams: "The ideational material has undergone displacements and substitutions, whereas the affects remain unaltered" (Freud, 1997: 460), i.e. affects are treated (more or less) as reliable indicators of what the dream is

about.[9] Yet, Freud seems to contradict himself in the same work when he argues that affects undergo a complicated process of "elimination, diminution and reversal" (Freud, 1997: 477),[10] though he does suggest that there is a difference, however, between the way a dream behaves towards representative contents (thoughts) that are subject to quite a number of distortions, and the way a dream treats affects, in that although affects can be transformed into something entirely different, they "resist fragmentation" (Green, 1999: 34). Freud's work on dreams is said to present an epistemological break from previous works discussing the notion of affect. This work opened up an array of questions regarding the nature of affects and in particular whether they are to be viewed as purely psychic energy or as motor and secretory discharge processes controlled by the unconscious. In *On the Psycho-Analytic Theory of Affects* (1953), David Rapaport argued that the year 1900 signalled a break in affect theory when Freud adopted the view of affects as discharge processes from the unconscious instead of psychic energy proper. As Ruth Stein puts it, "There is an inherent contradiction between seeing affects as fluid discharge processes and seeing them as relatively stable indicators of meaning

[9] Freud states that "A shrewd remark of Stricker's called our attention to the fact that the expressions of dreams cannot be disposed of in the contemptuous fashion in which we shake off the dream-content after we have waked, 'If I am afraid of robbers in my dreams, the robbers to be sure, are imaginary, but the fear of them is real'; and the same thing is true if I rejoice in my dream. According to the testimony of our feelings, an affect experienced in a dream is in no way inferior to one of the intensity experienced in waking life, and the dream presses its claim to be accepted as part of our real psychic experiences, by virtue of its affective rather than its ideational content" (Freud, 1997: 310). Freud goes on to say that in the waking state, in consciousness, we are unable "to evaluate an affect psychically except in connection with an ideational content," and if the affect and idea are "ill-matched as regards the nature of their intensity," our conscious awareness, our "waking judgment becomes confused" (Freud, 1997: 310). In other words, the intensity of affect in consciousness remains the same while the ideational content undergoes a transformation. This leads, Freud says, to a conflict between the idea and the affect, whereby the ideational content, having been altered by dream-distortion, no longer fits the affect that remains intact; affect appears to consciousness as a confused affect, or even a confused idea (this confused idea linked to affect is similar to Spinoza).

[10] It is significant to note that this contradiction emerges in light of a discussion regarding the recorded dreams (writing) of the novelist or poet. Freud differentiates between the dream-thought and the dream-content, describing them as two different representations of the same meaning in two different languages: the dream content is a translation of dream-thoughts, where the former is a form of picture-writing, while the latter refers to signs. In other words, the transition that takes place is one that moves from affective images to representational images or signification. This is something that we will see in more detail in the work of both Lyotard and Kristeva.

or of missing thoughts" (Stein, 1991: 17). It is this contradiction that seems to prompt Kristeva and Lyotard's readings of affect in Freud's work. The unconscious, in their view, is not only constituted by affects but its entire structure is grounded on a complex affective process (opposed to that of language and perceptual thought). If Kristeva and Lyotard arrive at different conclusions as to what organises the unconscious affective processes, this is because Freud's work allows for both of their readings. On the one hand, Kristeva views affect as a process of the drives, while Lyotard associates it with desire. This brings us to the complex question of whether affect in Freud is indeed unconscious.

In "The Unconscious" (1915), Freud asks whether affects can be unconscious as either a "quota of affects," "qualitatively defined affects" or as "anxiety." In this work his formal contention is that there can be no unconscious affects (in the same way as ideas), since the former are processes of discharge while the latter are cathexis of memory traces. He states:

> We should expect the answer to the question about unconscious feelings, emotions and affects to be just as easily given. It is surely of the essence of an emotion that we should be aware of it, i.e., that it should become known to consciousness. Thus the possibility of the attribute of unconsciousness would be excluded as far as emotions, feelings and affects are concerned. *But* in psycho-analytic practise we are accustomed to speak of unconscious love, hate, anger, etc., and find it impossible to avoid even the strange conjunction, 'unconscious consciousness of guilt', or a paradoxical 'unconscious anxiety'. […] it may happen that an affective or emotional impulse is perceived but misconstrued (Freud, 2001c: 177; my emphasis).

This idea of unfelt feelings is prominent in Lyotard's work on Freudian affect, which I will discuss in the following chapter and is what Adrian Johnston identifies in Freud (through Damasio's work) as "mis-felt feelings," a notion which I shall revisit. In this work Freud argues that the use of the terms 'unconscious affect' or 'unconscious emotion' refers to three vicissitudes that affect undergoes. Either the affect will remain in part or exactly as it is or it transforms into a qualitatively different "quota of affect"

(i.e. anxiety), or "it is suppressed, i.e., it is prevented from developing at all. We know, too, that to suppress the development of affect is the true aim of repression […] In every instance where repression has succeeded in inhibiting the development of affects, we term those affects […] 'unconscious'" (Freud, 2001c: 178). Freud, in his work on repression, makes an important distinction between what he names "the quota of affect" and the "qualitatively defined affect" that is relevant here. The former refers to instinct (insofar that it is understood as detached from the idea) that finds an expression proportionate to its level of intensity or quantity "in processes which are sensed as affects" (Freud, 2001c: 152). The latter, he argues, is "the subjective transposition of the quantity of instinctual energy" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1988: 14). Freud then suggests that an unconscious affect is a mis-felt or an un-felt affect which is always to some extent a repressed affect, i.e. only "a potential beginning" (Freud, 2001c: 178). Repression, therefore, beyond its function of withholding things from consciousness, also operates to prevent the development of affect and muscular activity (its external expression). According to Freud, "Affectivity manifests itself essentially in motor (secretory and vaso-motor) discharge;" however, the effects of this are two-fold: "an (internal) alteration of the subject's own body with reference to the external world" and a "motility, in actions designed to effect changes in the external world" (Freud, 2001c: 178). Affect as a process of discharge designates an exchange between an unconscious affective economy and conscious perception or awareness of the affect (where only a portion of the affect is consciously registered or, more accurately, sensed). Nevertheless, its fundamental effects are felt as change in both the self and the outside world. As I will show in the chapters that follow (on Lyotard and Kristeva), unconscious affective formations (and their processes) do not refer to feelings but rather involve a sensing that has the potential to affect both the body and the mind as well as

the external world, by giving rise to new conscious states of awareness (to new thoughts). In Freud, then, affect is a (fluid) process and remains an indeterminate concept that can only be grasped by its effects (for instance through the theory of dreams or negation, to which both Lyotard and Kristeva turn). The indeterminacy of emotive categories often leads to an overlap between emotive terms, and so in what follows I therefore turn to the problem of terminology, where I distinguish between different emotive categories and affect, as well as show the places where terms overlap.

The Issue of Terminology

Significantly, the notion of passion and the word 'passive' share the same Latin root in the word for 'suffering' (*passio*). In *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (1993), R.C. Solomon explains that passion is linked inexorably to passivity, since it implies that one is acted upon, and therefore illustrates a weakness or a lack of agency which is a suffering of sorts. For Solomon this is the myth of the passions, "It is the myth of passivity; the self-serving half-truth is the fact that we often suffer from our passions, submit ourselves to them, find ourselves carried away and foolishly behaving because of them" (Solomon, 1993: xv). For Sara Ahmed, on the other hand, "The association between passion and passivity is instructive. It works as a reminder of how 'emotion' has been viewed as 'beneath' the faculties of thought and reason" (Ahmed, 2004: 3). Even with the more contemporary word 'emotion', Ahmed says that being emotional involves having one's judgment affected by an other, and it is to be reactive rather than active, "dependent rather than autonomous" (Ahmed, 2004: 3). In Descartes' analysis of the notion of passion he examines whether emotions are predominantly tied to bodily sensations or to cognition. David Hume's view of the passions as 'impressions' brings about similar questions. While it is often noted that Descartes'

approach in *The Passions of the Soul* is full of problematic distinctions between the mind and the body, his understanding of passion takes a cognitivist approach to the emotions, as he argues that objects do not stir up diverse passions because they are diverse but rather because of the variable ways in which they may help us or harm us (Descartes, 1989: 349). This is an interesting idea that has provoked different reactions and interpretations. One suggestion is that Descartes argues that passions are reducible to sensations insofar as they are caused by an object (Brentano, 2003: 161; Greenspan, 2003: 265). Others state that Descartes critiqued the idea that objects may have causal properties, thereby suggesting that we do not have feelings for objects because of the nature of objects but rather because feelings "take the 'shape' of the contact we have with objects.[…] we do not love or hate because objects are good or bad, but rather because they seem 'beneficial' or 'harmful'. [and] Whether I perceive something to be beneficial or harmful clearly depends upon how I am affected by something" (Ahmed, 2004: 5). For Ahmed and others (see Teresa Brennan later), whether something is perceived as harmful or beneficial involves a thought process of evaluation and judgment "at the same time as it is 'felt' by the body" (Ahmed, 2004: 6), which is why, as we shall see further down, for her this judgment already involves a process of reading and interpretation.

The category of emotion, according to Thomas Dixon in "'Emotion': The History of a Keyword in Crisis" (2012), is a relatively new one, developed as a psychological category in the seventeenth century in order to replace a variety of terms such as 'appetites', 'passions', 'affections' and 'sentiments'. Brian Massumi makes a clear distinction between the terms feeling, affect and emotion. He argues that a feeling is a sensation that has been checked against previous experience and has been labelled –

for him, feeling is personal and biographical. An emotion is a social projection or display of a feeling that can either be genuine or feigned. He states:

> An emotion is a subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal. Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning. It is intensity owned and recognized (Massumi, 2002: 28).

In other words, emotions are narrated feelings, and unlike affect, which is viewed as pre-personal, emotions are specifically labelled feelings that have been semantically and semiotically formed. The Darwinian model of emotion, in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872), suggests that emotion is not only beneath but also behind the human as a sign of an earlier, more primitive time. Although Darwin uses the term emotion, his depiction of it as something primitive linked to instinct that hides behind the human (and reason) bears a resemblance to and shares characteristics with the notion of affect. As will be discussed in the following chapters, Deleuze, Lyotard and Kristeva associate affect with the inhuman, the infant, the animal, the stranger and marginalised figures that stand outside reason and language. Darwin states that "With mankind some expressions, such as the bristling of the hair under the influence of extreme terror, or the uncovering of the teeth under the furious rage, can hardly be understood, except on the belief that man once existed in a much lower and animal-like condition" (Darwin, 1904: 13-14). In other words the term emotion (as much as passion) reveals a hierarchy as well as a division between the emotions and reason. William James associates emotions with bodily sensation. In "What is an Emotion?" (1890), he argues that "The bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact… and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur IS the emotion" (James, 2013: 449). For William James emotion is the feeling of bodily change, and so it does not therefore involve thought processes or evaluation. The view of emotion as judgment derives from Aristotle, who holds a cognitivist view of what he

calls aesthesis (see later in the section on affect and image). Whereas some theorists view emotion as a judgment, like Robert C. Solomon in *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (1993), others view it as involving judgments, like Elizabeth Spelman in "Anger and Insubordination" (1989). These issues, however, are not limited to a discussion of emotion or passion but are ongoing ones that are related to the notion of affect as well and are taken up in contemporary discussions in the affective turn.

Affect theory therefore not only informs but is also informed by other emotive terms and issues that arise around these terms. The issues emphasised by writers of passion and emotion share similar concerns with theories of affect. Writers on affect wrestle with the issue of agency or the problem of passivity – whether affects have an underlying (or significant) role in perception, consciousness and reason, the relation between the body and the mind and the problematic question that concerns what they are: whether they are instincts or judgments involving reading and interpretation or a sensing that eludes perception and language. However, the ontological category of affect developed by Spinoza (as well as philosophy thereafter), and its later re-workings in psychoanalytic discourse, led by Freud, illustrate that affect should be approached and preserved as a distinct category that does not refer to emotions, feelings and passions. Unlike the previous terms they are viewed as an ontological category that does not refer to labelled emotions or personal feelings but rather as indeterminate possibilities that are the motivating energy behind movement and change not only on a personal level but also within the social domain. The notion of affect is not concerned with agency in the same way as passion (it seems to occupy both positions, both active and passive), as affect theory does not subordinate affects to either just the body or the mind but shows the connection to both. The one thing that stands out in the history of theories of affect, however, is that they emphasise the underlying role and importance of

affect in relation to reason, judgment and consciousness, which is something I will return to with respect to Lyotard, Deleuze and Kristeva.

Contemporary Theories of Affect

Unquestionably, Deleuze, through his reading of Spinoza, Francis Bacon and Henri Bergson, has been at the forefront of this nascent turn toward affect theory. Recently, however, interest in affect has exploded beyond the Deleuzian framework in various theoretical fields in both the humanities and the sciences. There is a strain of affect theory being developed in the area of cultural studies as well as queer studies and a more recent confluence developed around the notion of affect between philosophy and neurobiology, predominantly through the work of neurobiologist Antonio Damasio, whose work in turn has interestingly been interpreted through the discourses of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis by Adrian Johnston and Catherine Malabou in their work *Self and Emotional Life: Philosophy, Psychoanalysis and Neuroscience* (2013). The early discussions on affect, which I discuss through Lyotard, Deleuze and Kristeva, are rather different to the more recent debates, especially those taken up in cultural theory, as cultural theorists tend to emphasise the role of affect in the social and political realm and recuperate the notion as resistance whilst also underlining its negative role in fixing subjects within dominant ideological discourse.

The notion of affect in cultural studies is divisive amongst those who hold a strong bias towards negative affects, such as writers including Sara Ahmed in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004) and more recently in *The Promise of Happiness* (2010), Heather Love in *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (2007) and Sianne Ngai in *Ugly Feelings* (2007). In this cohort of writers, positive

affects (such as pleasure, happiness, peace, joy, etc.) are viewed as complicit with and sustaining dominant ideologies. In *Ugly Feelings*, for instance, Sianne Ngai holds the view that only negative or "ugly feelings" are what can produce agency or cultural resistance. Sara Ahmed makes some compelling arguments when critiquing what she calls "the happiness industry" (including self-help and positive psychology). Human happiness, she argues, has become a measure of human progress that not only sustains the impossible ideal held by dominant ideology but also creates unhappy affective figures, i.e. "the feminist kill-joy, unhappy queer, and melancholic migrant" (Ahmed, 2010: 17). On the other side of the spectrum, writers such as Elizabeth Freeman in *Time Binds* (2010) and José Munoz in *Feeling Brown* (2006) identify a critical agency in positive affects (pleasure, hope and optimism) for marginalised communities. In dealing with affect, cultural theorists tend not to distinguish between affect and emotion; in fact, the focus of their attention is on emotions and the impact that these have in the social, cultural and political realms rather than what is strictly defined as affect. In contrast, the turn to affect in contemporary philosophy preserves the difference between terms that Deleuze's Spinozist account takes into consideration.

Brian Massumi is a Deleuzian scholar whose definition of affect is largely indebted to the Spinozist understanding thereof. Affect in his view is raw, visceral and pre-individual; it is a type of pre-feeling that is sensed as something new (rather than felt consciously). In contrast he argues that feelings are constructed and conscious distortions of affect, while affects in themselves are independent of that construction, and if feelings are conceived as distortions of affect it is because affects cannot be provided for, nor represented in language or by any other transmittable information. He defines affect as the manifestation of the body's internalisation of an intensity that is relational:

> Affect is the quasi-causal openness of a characteristic interaction […] to a sensing of 'something new', the arrival or irruption of which is expressed in a global qualitative change in the dynamic of interaction, to some striking effect […] the 'affect' in play is not so much the personal 'familiarity and fondness' already felt […] these are already operations, emotion, personalised contents. The affect is more accurately the openness of the context to an anomalous expression of those emotions (Massumi, 2002: 227).

For Massumi, affects refer less to cognition and more to the body, his understanding of which is taken in part from Spinoza. He holds on to the relational aspect of the body and defines it by its capacity to affect and be affected, and therefore by its constantly changing charge of affect (or fluctuating levels of intensity). Although he adds a virtual (unconscious) dimension to affects, he separates the body (and bodily sensations) from cognition. As I will show in the chapter on Deleuze, Massumi departs from the Deleuzian definition of affect and the body, while Deleuze does not merely define the body by its relationality but rather he defines bodies as forces. Moreover, Massumi defines affect as the "sensing of something new;" however, for Deleuze, affect is not the sensing of something new but rather the creative element that produces the new (when in contact with the symbolic). Hence, the idea that affect is autonomous in Deleuze does not mean to say that it does not come into contact or form relations with heterogeneous elements. In fact, it is the relational element that is the truly creative aspect of Deleuze's theory of affect.

Massumi argues that affect relates more to the body than to cognition. In fact, the body is integral to his definition of affect and describes the skin or "walls" of the body as sensory receptors that allow for the intensity of an experience to be internalised and transmitted. For Massumi, affect relates to non-cognitive, corporeal processes or states and are "irreducibly bodily and autonomic" (Massumi, 2002: 28). Furthermore, Massumi attributes affect primarily to the body and separates the mind and the body more strictly, thus giving more importance to the latter. He also argues that the transmission of affect does not occur from body to body but is instead the unfolding and

folding of intensities that occur *between* two bodies that can either be virtual or flesh. This 'in-betweeness' of affect is a property that we see in other writers such as Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, to whom I will come back later.

Other contemporary discussions of affect centre on its capacity to leave a trace or produce an effect. This is the view emphasised by Megan Watkins in "Desiring Recognition, Accumulating Affect," where she questions whether affect leaves a residue or has an effect. She claims:

> Against the more social expression of emotion, affect is often viewed as a preliminal, preconscious phenomenon. A consequence of this is that affect is often conceived as autonomous and ephemeral. Its immediate impact is highlighted: the ways in which affect can arouse individuals or groups in some way but then seems to dissipate quickly leaving little effect (Watkins, 2010: 269).

In contrast to Massumi, then, she argues that "while this distinction is a productive one for dealing with particular types of affective experience," it does not account for the distinction that Spinoza made between affect and affection, and therefore it does not account for "the capacity of affect to be retained, to accumulate, to form dispositions and thus shape subjectivities that are of interest to me" (Watkins, 2010: 269). Watkins emphasises what Lyotard and Deleuze call the "affect-event." For her, it is significant that affect has the ability to leave residual effects behind that influence or leave impressions on individual subjectivities and perceptions. This is rather different from Massumi, who views it as a fleeting escape from confinement, suggesting that:

> Affect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality or potential for interaction, it is. Formed, qualified, situated perceptions and cognitions fulfilling functions of actual connection or blockage are the capture and closure of affect. Emotion is the (most contracted) expression of that *capture* (Massumi, 2002: 35; emphasis in original).

According to Watkins, Massumi's view is similar to that of Donald Nathanson, who states that "affect lasts but a few seconds" (Nathanson, 1992: 35), and she argues that both these writers seem to reserve the accumulation of affect (information rendered by

affect) for "mindful" phenomena such as memories that produce emotion. According to Watkins, what Massumi's distinction between affect and emotion involves is summed up by Nathanson when he writes that "affect is biology whereas emotion is biography" (Nathanson, 1992: 50). Watkins, conversely, argues that affect has the capacity to collect over time as a memory of the body and that this bodily memory has the ability to affect cognition. What is more, this accumulation can reach outside the parameters of one's consciousness, what she names (following Daniel Stern) an "interaffectivity," which involves the contagion of affect in the learning experience.[11] In her view affect and cognition cannot be separated so readily as in the work of Brian Massumi; rather, learning is an experience that is motivated by affect and therefore cannot be isolated from cognition, but more than that, it is these affective aspects of consciousness that render affect not only a social process but also a site of possibilities that unfold as a series of affective transactions. Although Watkins' concerns relate to education and learning, her emphasis on affect's capacity to leave a trace as well as having an effect on cognition and the social has significant similarities with the notion of affect as an event, which I will go on to discuss in the works of Lyotard, Deleuze and Kristeva.

The starting point of Patricia Clough's *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social* (2007) is Deleuze and Guattari, Spinoza, Bergson and Brian Massumi, although she conceptualises affect from a different perspective. If affect in Deleuze is primarily resistance and violence in or to the Symbolic order, affect in her work is in many ways theorised as the opposite of resistance. Clough understands affect, in a similar way to Massumi, as pre-individual bodily forces or responses that arise from visceral perception rather than consciousness. She too emphasises the body at the heart of affective experience and argues that it is a hub of indeterminate responses. Massumi,

[11] This is partly influenced by the work of S. Thomkins on an affective model of contagion.

like Lyotard, Deleuze and Kristeva (as we shall see in the following chapters), preserves the unconscious quality of affect. As already mentioned previously, affect in Massumi is in a virtual (indeterminate) space that contains infinite potential. He argues that there is always a virtual remainder after an affect has reached conscious perception or has been expressed through language as an emotion. Unlike Lyotard, however, who argues that the complexity of affect is heightened upon its entry into language, Massumi, according to Clough, illustrates that consciousness reduces affect's complexity and in comparison is mundane. Patricia Clough argues that he understands affect as a point of emergence that moves through a loop between virtual and actual and that his idea of indeterminacy does not look to the pre-social body but rather considers affect in his work as "'open-endedly social,' that is, social in a manner 'prior to' the separating out of individuals'" (Clough, 2007: 209). In other words, like Deleuze, Lyotard and Kristeva, who argue that affect occurs before the formation of subjectivities and before the distinction between individuals, Clough through Massumi argues that "affect refers to the metastability of a body, where the unstable pre-individual forces, which make up the body's metastability, are neither in a linear relationship nor a deterministic one to it" (Clough, 2007: 209). Clough goes further to question how affect can be viewed as pre-individual, beyond signification, narratives or discourses and beyond meaning. She asks what it means to register feelings that are not felt and experiences that have not been experienced (consciously), and she contends that if this is possible it is precisely due to the virtual temporality of affect (as emergence), since it is this quality of affect that provides it with its force and renders it independent of emotion, language and sensation. Instead of viewing this emergence as resistance, however, she conceptualises affect and the affective turn as corresponding to a particular formation of the social, whereby "bodily affect is mined for value" (Clough, 2007: 220). In analysing the social's

relationship to affect, Clough insists on emphasising that we are part of the social and that social phenomena are not scrutinised from an outside position; rather, she argues that governmental projects deploy affective technologies, and it is in this sense that affect can no longer be understood in her model as a resistance. She states:

> While the political gain expected of the affective turn – its openness, emergence, and creativity – is already the object of capitalist capture, a capital shifts to accumulate in the domain of affect and deploys racism to produce an economy to realise this accumulation it is important to remember the virtual at the threshold. Beyond it, there is always a chance for something else, unexpected, new (Clough, 2007: 224).

Clough argues that affect does not resist the social but instead makes up part of the social and is in fact always prey to Symbolic capture. What the recent affective turn, though, has introduced into the social is a register that does not amount to the realm of signification nor to the psyche but to non-linear micro-temporalities that can be re-articulated and are ultimately the cause of change that allows for something new to appear. What I will show in the following chapters is that Deleuze, Lyotard and Kristeva understand affect not as the emergence of something new, or even the possibility of something new in itself (contra Massumi), but as what has the *ability* to create something new by *disturbing* the Symbolic (and not "capital capture," as Clough suggests). This explains why they understand it as a violence rather than force, which is reserved for their notions of desire, in Lyotard and Deleuze, and love (agape), in Kristeva. I will be looking at this idea in more detail in each of the following chapters.

Another writer investigating the relationship between affect and the social (as previously mentioned) is cultural theorist Sara Ahmed in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004) and more recently in *The Promise of Happiness* (2010). In contrast to the writers mentioned above (including Lyotard, Deleuze and Kristeva), Ahmed does not view affect as autonomous, and it is significant to note that she does not distinguish strictly between affect and emotion. The difference between the works of the writers

with which I deal, that came out of the early 1970s, and the affective turn in contemporary cultural theory, like Ahmed's work, is that there has been a shift from the affective processes that come from the depths of the body and the psyche to exploring instead "how emotions work to shape the 'surfaces' of individual and collective bodies" (Ahmed, 2004: 1). In Ahmed's account, bodies are not forces (as in Deleuze), but rather "Bodies take the shape of the very contact that they have with objects and others" (Ahmed, 2004: 1). Affect is a corresponding element of a pre-existing object; it is the imprint or impression left when two bodies are in contact with one another.[12] In the context of the social she argues that emotion "aligns subjects with collectives by attributing 'others' as the 'source' of our feelings" (Ahmed, 2004: 1). For this writer affects or emotions become problematic in the social context, where this "other" is the alien other, the immigrant that becomes the source of one's pain and misfortune. Ahmed's concerns regarding the politics of emotion illustrate how language charged with emotion evokes a "we" that identifies itself with the injured nation in a "performance of personal injury" (Ahmed, 2004: 2). She also posits that in this context whiteness transforms into a familial tie that views "strangeness" (or otherness) as a threat, as "bodies out of place" (Ahmed, 2004: 2). The affective register for Ahmed is viewed in a negative light and designates the point when affect enters language and becomes deceitful. I would argue that the writers that I discuss in the following chapters

[12] David Hume is Ahmed's point of reference in viewing affect and emotion as impression. She argues that "to form an impression might involve acts of perception and cognition as well as an emotion. But forming an impression also depends on how objects impress upon us" (Ahmed, 2004: 6). The etymology of "impression" is pertinent here, in that an impression involves leaving an imprint on a surface; it is a belief; it creates an image; it imitates, "an affect that leaves its mark or trace" (Ahmed, 2004: 6). She argues through Hume that bodily sensation, emotion and thought cannot be experienced as distinct realms of human experience, and she states that "whether something feels good or bad *already* involves a process of reading, in the very attribution of significance" (Ahmed, 2004: 6). Her view complicates the understanding of unconscious affect in my writers, since they all view the unconscious as already populated and social. As a type of history it is unclear as to whether the unconscious is capable of retaining power and dominance or "grand narratives," which can be as ideological as consciously formed, socially constructed narratives in the domain of language.

do not view affect as a purely negative phenomenon but as a process that is both painful and pleasurable and, more importantly, productive (this is a point on which Ahmed's analysis differs). Affective processes in Lyotard, Deleuze and Kristeva explain what occurs before affect has transformed into language or personal and labelled emotions. They describe it as what incites the emergence of language via a painful labouring (linked to anxiety, trauma and melancholia) that affect invokes as well as the pleasurable state that is associated with creating new ways of bearing witness to it in new ways. Ahmed understands emotion as something that "sticks" as well as "moves" (Ahmed, 2004: 4). Furthermore, like Watkins and Clough, she argues that there is an accumulation of emotion (what sticks) and its transmission (movement) in the social context. She maintains that "What moves us, what makes us feel, is also that which holds us in place – or gives us a dwelling place" (Ahmed, 2004: 11). What she is describing here is what Massumi would call the "position points of language" that constitute linguistic space. Ahmed is no longer in affective space but in the pauses created by language, by conscious thought rather than in the flux of movement that constitutes affect. Her understanding of emotion as 'attachment' refers to a particular explanation of affect as a relation. However, since this attachment/relation refers to linguistically labelled and shared emotion, it does not pertain to the theory of affect but belongs instead to the realm of language. What I will show in the following chapter on Lyotard is that the relation (although affective in nature) can only become an attachment when affect forms a relationship with language such that although language itself cannot contain it, the nature of the relation becomes linguistic. Ahmed explains that it is not the emotion that circulates but the objects of the emotion: "Hence, movement does not cut the body off from the 'where' of its inhabitance, but connects bodies to other bodies" (Ahmed, 2004: 11). Unlike the three writers with whom I deal, who view affect as being

prior to language, and therefore prior to any theorisation or division between 'good' or 'bad' affects, cultural theory enters the debate from the perspective of the social, which is always already predominantly a linguistic relation that deals with emotion rather than affect.

Another writer that emphasises affect as judgments that involve an interpretation is Teresa Brennan. In *The Transmission of Affect* (2004) she argues that affects are evaluative judgments rather than an emotion or an expression of an emotion, while affect is "any evaluative (positive or negative) orientation towards an object" (Brennan, 2004: 5). She also claims that the parts of affect that evaluate and judge single out the physiological responses that they evoke from those linked with influxes of passion or emotion. Brennan says that affects are what one feels with, and emotions are what one feels as two separate phenomena (a conflict). Affects, she reasons, are physiological things, while emotions are correlates of pre-existing affective connections. Her view of affects as judgments aligns her with Sara Ahmed, to some extent, since both argue that affect (or emotion) involves a prior reading. Both also emphasise the transmission of affect and examine how one person's emotions can be absorbed by another or even a group. However, unlike Ahmed, who argues the fixity of the emotion, Brennan argues that emotions are deposited and dumped after their expression, while affect has the capability of intensifying and weakening. Her view of affect centres on the continuous communication between individuals and their (social) environments, and so she therefore emphasises it as something social rather than merely personal. The social aspect of affect is developed in my own writers, albeit in a different way.

In "An Inventory of Shimmers," Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg identify affect as an in-betweeness, noting that "Affect arises in the midst of in-between-ness: in the capacities to act and be acted upon. Affect is an impingement or

extrusion of a momentary or sometimes more sustained state of relation as well as the passage (and the duration of passage) of forces or intensities" (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010: 1). Affect for them is a movement within a state of relation that occurs between different things or people, as well as the exchange of intensities and the duration of the movements between these intensities. Affects here are viewed as forces. They exist as an "accumulative beside-ness" and are removed from conscious knowingness (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010: 2). They too differentiate between affect and emotion. I share with them their view that affect incites people to move, think, extend and intensify. This is something that I consider a large part of the argument formulated in the writers I discuss further down. Seigworth and Gregg point out the problem that a good deal of contemporary affect theory faces when affect and force are used interchangeably. They contend that not every affect has the property of being forceful and that it is more like an event which occurs during exchanges and movement between intensities. As I will go on to show in the following chapters, force is a term that Deleuze, Lyotard and Kristeva do not use in relation to affect (which is denoted as violence) but to desire (in Deleuze and Lyotard). Rather, they view affect as an event that occurs to consciousness and language. I will be discussing this in depth in each of the following chapters. Affect, Seigworth and Gregg note, is created in the space between two or more intensities and lives in a state of beside-ness, and it exists according to these writers between the utterance of the word and the meaning of the word. I will be looking at these issues in the chapters to come in relation to Deleuze, Lyotard and Kristeva.

An interesting development in affect theory is the turn towards neuroscience. In *Self and Emotional Life: Philosophy, Psychoanalysis and Neuroscience*, Adrian Johnston and Catherine Malabou take up the affective turn in the neurosciences which

has been led by the work of Antonio Damasio. Both argue the significance of Damasio's work in *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain* (1994) and *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain* (2003). Malabou and Johnston view the neurobiological interruption in the theory of affect as significant, since it informs both philosophy and psychoanalysis. Johnston posits that "Catherine explores the future of psychoanalysis as it is interrupted and cut short by the neurosciences. I explore the future of psychoanalysis as it is enriched and carried forward by the same sciences" (Johnston, 2013: xv). For Malabou, neurobiology is capable of discussing affect in a way that psychoanalysis and philosophy fall short of. Johnston, however, argues that the work being done in neurobiology can only help the discussion on affect theory in philosophy and psychoanalysis and develop it in new ways. He writes:

> Between phenomenology, structuralism, poststructuralism, feminism, and deconstruction, to name some of the main trajectories shaping the history of this philosophical tradition, a plethora of debates remain unresolved about what affects are and the extent of their importance in shaping the objects of philosophical investigation. We each frame these debates in light of the neurosciences (Johnston, 2013: xvi).

For these two writers, neurobiology opens up the discussion on affect and emotion, thus informing and contributing to the already existing discussions on affect in both philosophy and psychoanalysis. For Johnston and Malabou, philosophy finds its limits in affect theory, illustrating its shortcomings. Although I share their view that affect theory can only be enriched by interdisciplinary research, I am uncertain as to whether it is philosophy alone that comes up short in this area of study. After all, Damasio's point of departure is the philosophy of Descartes and Spinoza. Throughout its history, and in particular after the Spinozist account of affect theory and the Cartesian development of passions, much of the discussion surrounding the volatile notion of affect has been based upon the coming together of different theoretical fields, namely philosophy and

psychoanalysis, for instance, linguistic theory and philosophy, etc. (this is exemplified in the writers with which I work). Affect, then, in my view, is a notion that seems to bring together different areas of study and discourses. It therefore becomes a catalyst for forming relations between different disciplines in relational studies, and so in this sense we might say that affect theory is autological.

What is of interest to me in their discussion on affect and neurobiology is Johnston's return to Freud and the notion of unconscious affect. He argues that "I am fixated upon the seemingly paradoxical notion of unconscious affects (i.e., feelings that are not felt as such). As I remarked previously, the relation (or lack thereof) between the unconscious and affective life is an issue that haunts psychoanalysis from its inception with Freud onward" (Johnston, 2013: xvii). He also states that no one philosopher has made the link between Freud's notion of affect and his theory of the unconscious. He argues that it is instead neurobiology that makes this link and informs the theory of affect in both fields of psychoanalysis and philosophy. As I will show in the following chapter on Lyotard, several decades prior to Damasio's work, and the links that Johnston makes within the field of psychoanalysis and in particular Freudian unconscious affect, Lyotard had already turned back and made the link between Freudian affect and the unconscious and wrote extensively on this matter, thereby illustrating all the more strongly that Lyotard's work in this area remains still very much unknown.

Johnston differentiates between affects, feelings and emotions, and provides us with a definition of feeling that aligns him with much of Lyotard's later work on affect. He states:

> Insofar as feelings are always feelings of feelings (i.e., mediated experiences of the second order or greater), the phenomena of 'mis-felt feelings,' generated through the interference of defence mechanisms functioning unconsciously within and between

> strata of psychical structure, become thinkable possibilities, possibilities not yet thought through by philosophy and psychoanalysis" (Johnston, 2013: xvii-xviii).

Interestingly, Johnston tells us that neurobiology, in particular the work of Damasio (as well as LeDoux and Jaak Panksepp), is able to explain the seemingly paradoxical Freudian notion of "unconscious affects" that has "not yet been thought through by philosophy and psychoanalysis." Malabou and Johnston, through Damasio and Freud, suggest that affect can be defined as an unconscious process: "Damasio treats emotions as automatic physiological processes regulated by non-conscious bodily mechanisms, although he stipulates that the translation of emotions into consciously registered feelings allows for partial cognitive-intellectual mediation and modulation of embodied emotions" (Johnston, 2013: 173) As we shall see in this thesis, not only has philosophy thought these issues through, but Lyotard in particular, and Kristeva's return to Freud (through the notion of the semiotic), also explain precisely the paradoxes of unconscious affect in Freud as well as viewing affect not only as events or states but also as a process through which creativity and the new occur.

Affect and Image

The issues at stake in current debates around the concept of the image arrive from two very different attitudes held in relation to images in the history of Western philosophy: Plato's iconoclastic view, i.e. his mistrust of images, and Aristotle's iconophilia, which reconceives the Platonic image and redirects the discussion of image in terms of thought. The philosophical trajectory along which the study of affect is delineated in Lyotard, Deleuze and Kristeva's works intersects with the notion of the image. In the following chapters I will be tracing this trajectory and showing the significance of the image to their theorisation of affect. The image is constituted in all

three as the site of affect and what is productive of affect. Each in his or her own terms redefines the image. They share the view that an affective image can help us understand art and perception in terms that extend beyond an image's representational qualities (i.e. its signifying properties). Given that both art and perception sit somewhere between theory and practice (experience), it is unsurprising that affect theory concerns itself with the visual and visuality. There is a prevailing concern among these writers to do justice to images rather than treat them reductively, which entails an effort to comprehend images in their own terms and to allow for different types of images to emerge. Their views are shaped by a long lineage of writers who associate affect with aesthesis, with affect and body, with perception and thought. The image shares with the notion of affect difficulty in being pinned down, as it too is a vague and volatile concept. Images can be graphic, optical, perceptual, mental or verbal, and they have been associated with dreams, fantasies, memories and artistic images such as those produced by painting or photography; furthermore, there are literary images (for instance, metaphors) as well as ideas and sense impressions. The study of images is therefore not restricted to a single strand of theorisation, even though in philosophy there are two overriding understandings from which much of the above stems. In what follows I will discuss briefly the various philosophical frameworks through which the image has been understood, as well as the affective (bodily) image that my three writers develop in terms of an affective process. These involve invisible and inner-bodily images that are reconceived in light of affect. What interests me, in what follows, is not just the concept of the image, but also – and more specifically – the notion of the visual.

Theories of images tend to derive from two influential and diverging accounts, one coming from Plato and the other from Aristotle. In Plato's *The Republic*, his influential passage of "The Allegory of the Cave" is consistently used as a reference to

reinforce the notion of the image (and perception) as an inaccurate representation of reality. Plato's suspicion of images led him to claim that ordinary people are like the slaves chained in a dark cave awaiting enlightenment. In this passage, as it is often articulated, he treats image as a representation of reality, and therefore as imitations and reproductions, that are copies and false. It is significant also to consider briefly a different passage in the same work called 'Art and Illusion', where Plato discusses aesthetic images of art. His theory of art is twofold; on the one hand, he views it as an imitation (a copy of a copy) that leads towards illusion. Art imitates the objects and events of life (the material world), but the changing physical world is only an imitation of Forms or Ideas; these are non-material and abstract, but they are also substantial because they form the highest kind of reality and are considered more real than physical objects. Hence, since physical things (the material world) imitate Forms, and because art imitates physical things, art is understood as a copy of a copy. His view of the art image here is consistent with his understanding of perception in the aforementioned allegory, since in both cases images are thought of as irredeemably deceitful. However, on the other hand there is another, perhaps more redeeming, understanding of art in Plato that involves the role of the artist, who here is divinely inspired or possessed by a personal daimon (an inspiring spirit), while the effects of art, its ability to create passion(s), makes it powerful. The predominantly negative qualities that Plato associates with images have led to the modern conception of the image as representation and has influenced a number of different thinkers who share his view that images should be approached with apprehension, that our eyes (and the visual domain) are dangerously deceptive and are thereby unreliable sources of knowledge and truth certainty.

In contrast, Aristotle holds a very different view of images. It is not that he denies the property of imitation inherent to images but rather that he interprets it differently. For Aristotle, imitation is instinctual and does not derive from a lack of visual clarity that the shadows of the puppeteers create in Plato's allegory. Instead, we are born with an instinct for imitation that involves pleasure in recreating the things that we can see; what might be painful to look it in reality can become pleasurable in representation. This view of pleasure and pain, connected to the idea of art creation, corresponds with the theories of affect that will be elaborated in the following chapters. Imitation here acquires a use value, in that we not only use it to create things (like art) but it is also a source or a repository of knowledge, a way by which we can gain true knowledge of the world. However, this is not the only kind of image in his thought. In *De Anima: On the Soul*, Aristotle deals with the images of perception, arguing that "the soul never thinks without an image" (Aristotle, 2006: 32), and he places images at the very heart of his epistemological theory. Here he associates images with thought and words as well as *aisthema*. He writes:

> Perceiving is analogous to mere saying and thinking, but when it is of the pleasant or painful the soul engages in pursuit or avoidance and these are analogous to assertion and denial. In fact, to experience pleasure and pain is to be active with the perspective of good or bad as such. Avoidance, what is more, and desire are, in their actualised state, the same thing, nor are their faculties different either from each other or from the perspective of faculty, but their way of being the same thing is different. For in the thinking soul, images play the part of percepts, and the assertion or negation of good or bad is invariably accompanied by avoidance or pursuit, which is the reason for the soul's never thinking without an image (Aristotle, 2006: 32).[13]

This passage (as I will show) is of particular importance to the theories of affect developed in the following three chapters. Aristotle's notion of soul is understood as the

[13] It is interesting to note that the term for image here is not *phantasma* but *aisthema* (a rare word he uses only once more in *De Anima*). Although there is a close dependency, he differentiates between the two and distinguishes the intellectual soul and the sensitive soul (located immediately below it in the hierarchy).

form or essence of any living thing, and he maintains that the soul is not distinct from the body, since it is the soul that makes an organism an organism. When claiming that the soul thinks in images (that are of *aisthema*) he not only links the body and mind via the image, but also distinguishes between various operations that it is capable of. He also differentiates between two types of image: those of representation and thought and those of *aisthema* (pleasure and pain), which involve a form of judgment different to the one involved in perception (language and thought). Image as *aisthema* is not viewed as passive but as active. Aristotle is therefore the philosopher through whom the image and affect can be thought of together in contrast to the representational account of images that stems from Plato. It is the latter writer who is a source of influence to Descartes and whose reinterpretation of the Platonic image makes an impact on the linguistic turn from which the affective turn departs.

In *Discourses on Method, Optics, Geometry and Meteorology* (2001) [1637], Descartes turns his interest to optics and the visual. Extending Plato's theory of images as representation, he develops a notion of the discursive image, by arguing for the importance of signs in relation to the image. He warns against the assumption that in order to sense, the mind needs to perceive particular (external) images that are received by the external sense organs and are transmitted by objects to the brain. Conceived in this way, he states, we cannot know anything about images except that they must resemble the objects that they represent. Rather, he argues that there are many things other than images that can stimulate our thought, such as words and signs, which do not resemble what they signify. He points out that images need not "resemble in every respect the objects they represent – for otherwise there would be no distinction between the object and its image" (Descartes, 2001: 37). His enquiry into optics formulates his conceptualisation (of images) of perception, and this distance between an object and an

image in the articulation of language to which he refers is the very basis of many contemporary linguistic theories, including Saussure's structuralist account. Descartes notes:

> In order to perceive, the mind need not contemplate any images resembling the things that it senses. But this makes it no less true that the objects we do look at do imprint very perfect images on the back of our eyes. Some people have very ingeniously explained this already by a comparison with the images that appear in a chamber, when having it completely closed except for a single hole […] not only do the images of objects form thus on the back of the eye, but they also pass beyond to the brain […] (Descartes, 2001: 38).

Descartes' description of the camera obscura has been interpreted in various ways. While some argue that he is describing the eye as disembodied, leading to a distorted image, others, such as Margaret Atherton in *Sites of Vision: The Discursive Construction of Sight in the History of Philosophy* (1999), reason that Descartes is instead discussing how a physical body part, the eye, affects what is imprinted on the retina and thereby has effects on what and how we see (and understand).[14] In short, in Descartes, "the camera obscura model explains only what imprinted on the retina, and we do not see what is on the retina" (Atherton, 1999: 146). This is not to say that there are two forms of vision in Descartes, or that we should perceive resemblance (imitation) as a copy of something original; rather he explains how perception is formed by the immediacy with which the movements constituting images act on the mind and body (in fact, uniting the two).[15] Descartes' view of the image is indebted to but also marks a difference between both Plato and Aristotle. What is perhaps more significant in his view of optics and perception is that he discovers what is essentially the backdrop to

[14] See Atherton *Sites of Vision: The Discursive Construction of Sight in the History of Philosophy* (1999) pgs: 143-148.

[15] Descartes claims that "We must not hold that it is by means of this resemblance that the picture causes us to perceive the objects, as if there were yet other eyes in our brain with which we could apprehend it; but rather that it is the movements of which the picture is composed which, acting immediately on our mind inasmuch as it is united to our body, are so established by nature as to make it have such perceptions" (Descartes, 2001: 39).

current linguistic theories of representation and language (in particular those associated with structuralism) that my own writers revise through the theory of affect, often by turning back to Aristotle's image of *aesthesis* (on this point see the chapters on Lyotard and Kristeva).

The predominantly negative or suspicious view of images carries into the twentieth century, influencing various areas of thought that I will not take up here at length.[16] Amongst the writers who tend to diverge from these theories is Henri Bergson in *Matter and Memory* (1896), who (as seen previously) places the body and image at the heart of his philosophy. In this work the world becomes what he calls an "aggregate of images," while perception of the world takes place as an "eventual action of one particular image, my body" (Bergson, 2002: 89). For Bergson there is a non-rational aspect to cognition that he understands as a bodily image. He distinguishes between the bodily image and other images, claiming that "Yet there is one of them which is distinct from all the others, in that I do not know it only by perceptions, but from within by affections: it is my body" (Bergson, 1991: 17). Bergson's thought on bodily images, linked to the notion of affection, resonates in other philosophical fields such as phenomenology, which is concerned predominantly with the structure of experience and investigating the question of how structures appear. Moreover, phenomenology emphasises the issue of "intentionality" that much of post-structuralism (including my writers) strives to dismantle. Edmund Husserl, for instance, attributed intentionality to consciousness by arguing that consciousness and the world are co-constituted. Images and perceptions are viewed as having a certain essence and are inherently tied to

[16] This includes a large number of writers, Marx and Freud being two of the most influential, and more recently: Adorno's ideological critique in "Television: Multilayered Structure" in *The Culture Industry* (1954); Guy Debord's "Society of the Spectacle" (1967); Frederic Jameson's "Images as Commodity" in *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) and Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994), to name just a few.

particular defining qualities. The issues of intentionality and essentialism, as well as the transcendental subject in Husserl's work, (see Chapter Four) are the ground upon which post-structuralism, through a critique of these ideas, emerges. Writers from different theoretical fields of study, including linguistics, feminist studies, psychoanalysis and literary theory (and the writers I deal with here), critique these aspects of his thought.

The phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty is better received especially among the writers with which I deal herein. In "Eye and Mind," in *The Primacy of Perception* (1964), Merleau-Ponty rethinks what is understood by image and the visible by analysing painting as a form of vision. He critiques the representational view of perception by exploring the paradoxes of human vision through the body, and he explains that the two aspects constituting experience (or perception), namely vision and movement, can only be understood through its relation to the body. He writes that "My movement is not a decision made by the mind […] it is the natural consequence and the maturation of my vision. I say of a thing that is moved; but my body moves itself; it is not blind of itself; it radiates from a self… The enigma is that my body simultaneously sees and is seen" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 162). Vision, according to him, occurs within and among things, and he shares with Lyotard and Deleuze in their work on aesthetics (see later) the view that emphasises the body/world of affect and sensation as a continuum between the viewer/artist and the artwork. Unlike these two writers, however, Merleau-Ponty considers affect and sensation as subjective phenomena that arise out of a subjective (individual) and intentional accord with the world. The writers that I deal with herein are indebted to phenomenological accounts, but they also depart from them by treating the affective image as something pre-personal and unintentional, since it comes into existence as a result of chance encounters. I will now turn to the

integral notion of the image that arrives from structuralism and gives rise to the linguistic turn.

As often mentioned, the affective turn is prompted by a critique of what has become known as the 'linguistic turn', which has its influences in the structuralist framework deriving from Ferdinand de Saussure.[17] Saussure's structuralism is viewed as a science of signs, which are constituted by a signifier and a signified that are cut off from their referent and therefore from the reality of an expressive speaking subject. His theory of language has been thought to provide an analysis of surface phenomena and the structure that governs all possible combinations of those elements (units).[18] David Lodge in his "Ferdinand de Saussure" expresses this view succinctly. He writes:

> Before Saussure, the study of language, or philology as it was usually called, had been essentially historical, tracing change and development in phonology and semantics within and between languages or groups of languages. Saussure argued that a scientific linguistics could never be based on such a diachronic study but only by approaching language as a synchronic system i.e., a system which all the elements and rules are in theory simultaneously available to the user of the language (Lodge, 1988: 42).

The process of representation, or of image formation in this analysis, is therefore characterised by signs that are governed by the structure, rules and regulations that make up language. More than that, the structuralist account of language posits that the underlying structures that organise units and rules into meaningful systems are produced

[17] The paradigm of language established by Saussure in his *Course in General Linguistics* focuses on the study of signs and expands the Cartesian theory of the discursive and representational image. According to Saussure, language – what he names *le langage* in its various forms and manifestations – consists of two elements: *la langue* (signification) and *la parole* (speech). *La langue* (the system of language) denotes a structure, a system of internal dependencies that operate in such a way that everything in this system is interdependent. He argues that every sign signifies by its function in the linguistic system, in such a way that "in language there are only differences *without positive terms*" (Saussure, 2011: 120).

[18] See François Dosse in *The History of Structuralism: The Rising Sign, 1945-1966*. He claims "The other fundamental aspect of the Saussurean approach was to see language as hermetic. The linguistic sign does not join a thing with its name, but a concept with an acoustic image whose link is arbitrary; reality or the referent is therefore placed outside the field of study [of linguistics]" (Dosse, 1997: 48). For similar accounts of Saussure's theory of language, also see: Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983) and Fredric Jameson's *The Prison-house of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism* (1972).

by the human mind rather than sense-perception. Saussure's science of signs is said to have influenced the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan and provoked the linguistic turn in philosophy. As Dylan Evans puts it: "Lacan's engagement with linguistics revolves almost entirely around the work of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and Roman Jakobson (1896-1982)" (Evans, 1996:104). Lacan's work reinterprets Saussurean linguistics in terms of subject-identity (ego) formation through discursively constructed or representational images that form thought and perception. In what follows I will take a closer look at how Lacan develops and appropriates Saussure's idea in his own psychoanalytic work.

Lacan reinterprets Saussurean linguistics in terms of subject-identity formation. The structuralist notion of the 'linguistic subject' argues that subjectivity is constructed by or through language. It can be traced back to a particular understanding of the Lacanian notion of subjectivity. Bruce Fink, in *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*, explains why conscious identity formation is viewed as a construct of language in Lacan: "we are born into a world of discourse, a discourse or language that precedes our birth and that will live after our death. […] A child is thus born into a pre-established place in its parents' universe. […] Those words are handed down to them by centuries of tradition: they constitute the Other of language, […] the linguistic Other, or the Other as language" (Fink, 1995: 5).[19] The components of the Saussurean sign, the signifier and the signified, play an important role in Lacan's reformulation of Saussurean linguistics. The theory of subjectivity in Lacan is set up around his work on the "mirror stage" that takes place in the order that he names the Imaginary. Here he highlights the necessity of the "other" (the subject's dependency on the other) in the subject's ego development and the effects that this has on the subject's

[19] See Jacques Lacan *Écrits* (2002, 161-2) [1966].

understanding of himself, as well as the subject's social identity. The developments taking place during the mirror stage, Lacan claims, "will also be the source of secondary identifications" (Lacan, 2010: 1164-5). Lacan's subject is a divided subject, alienated from his own identity (alienation serves as a psychological defence against the id). Language in this model is a condition for subjectivity but also simultaneously the source of the subject's alienation. Language, for Lacan, is a structure of differing signifiers (as opposed to Saussure, Lacan places the signifier over the signified) and the subject is viewed as "the subject of the signifier" (where the human subject's identity is given even before birth by the signifier). Lacan claims that,

> The signifier, as I have said, is characterised by the fact that it represents a subject to another signifier. What is involved in the sign? The cosmic theory of knowledge or world view has always made a big deal of the famous example of smoke that cannot exist without fire. […] Smoke can just as easily be the sign of a smoker. […] Thus a sign is not the sign of some thing, but of an effect that is what is presumed as such by a functioning of the signifier. That effect is what Freud teaches us about, and it is the starting point of analytic discourse, namely, the subject. The subject is nothing other than what slides in a chain of signifiers, whether he knows which signifier he is or not. That effect – the subject – is the intermediary effect between what characterizes a signifier and another signifier, namely, the fact that each of them, each of them is an element. A subject, as such, doesn't have much to do with jouissance. But, on the other hand, his sign is capable of arousing desire (Lacan, 1998: 49-50).

In this passage, Lacan underlines the idea that the signifier is a representation of another signifier (or representation) and is intimately linked to the subject. The subject here is a position in the signifying chain where his or her social identity shifts from signifier to signifier (representation to representation / discourse to discourse) and the sign is merely an effect of shifting signifiers. In "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious" Lacan contends that, "Thus the subject, too, if he can appear to be the slave of language is all the more so of a discourse in the universal movement in which his place is already inscribed at birth, if only by virtue of his name" (Lacan, 2010: 1170). The Lacanian subject carries on being a divided subject past the mirror stage and not only by virtue of his alienated identity but also because every subject is divided between consciousness

(the Ego / I) and the unconscious (other). However, in Lacan, the Freudian unconscious is also reconfigured in linguistic terms as being "structured like a language."[20] Subjectivity in this particular reading of Lacan is therefore constructed through language and desire, while the Imaginary order whereby the ego (or subject-identity) is formed in the "mirror stage," which is the realm of surface appearances that are inherently deceptive. The mirror stage entails the construction of the ego through identification with the counterpart or a specular image. The image here is therefore imitative, fraudulent and discursive, and it has its influences in Descartes and Plato. In this framework it is language that speaks while phenomenology, in contrast, focuses on an intentional subject and an expressive body (Merleau-Ponty).

Phenomenology and structuralism make up what are essentially thought to be two incompatible theories of the subject: the problematic relationship between the phenomenological subject (the speaking subject is an entity in the world characterised by his/her intent) and the structural subject of language that is emphasised in the 'linguistic turn' and informed by particular readings of Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*. Structural analysis is often thought to be opposed to phenomenology, since the former is thought to remove the speaking subject, or to consider a subject which is pre-linguistic, while the latter reduces the subject's role to an "irreducible datum" (Stawarska, 2014: 2). The 'linguistic turn' appears to retain from structuralism the following two ideas: that signs signify with a certain degree of autonomy with regard to subjects, and that signs are organised into systems that have the capacity to produce real

[20] In *Seminar XX* Lacan writes: "You see that by still preserving this 'like', I am saying within the bounds of what I put forward when I say that the unconscious is structured *like* a language. I say like so as not to say – and I come back to this all the time – that the unconscious is structured by a language. The unconscious is structured like the assemblages in question in set theory, which are like letters" (Lacan, 1998: 48). For Lacan the signifier creates the signified and the signifier itself refers to other signifiers in the symbolic chain. The sign as a whole therefore becomes an effect of the signifier as it shifts positions in the chain. However, Lacan points out that the unconscious is not structured by language, rather that it is structured like language. For a more recent and different interpretation of Lacan's infamous assertion that "the unconscious is structured like a language" see Lorenzo Chiesa's *Subjectivity and Otherness* (2007) pgs: 46-59.

effects. The dominant scholarly view of structuralism accepted in post-war France understands linguistic expression as being shaped by a received and sedimented language system where the subject is produced by, or even sacrificed to, language. Fredric Jameson in *The Prison-house of Language* sums up this idea when he writes that:

> The movement of Saussure's thought may perhaps be articulated as follows: language is not an object, not a substance, but rather a value: thus language is a perception of identity. But in language the perception of identity is the same as the perception of difference; thus every linguistic perception holds in its mind at the same time an awareness of its own opposite (Jameson, 1972: 35)

This is a key factor in structuralism, as it sees the subject as a position in a system produced by that system. Language expression in structuralism therefore becomes a matter of signification.[21] The relation between the speaking subject and the language system is thereby imagined in this reading as a kind of 'battlefield', where the speaker cannot claim any authority over linguistic expression. Language here imposes its own "historically weighed associations on the speaking present" (Stawarska, 2014: 3). At the heart of this reading lies a profound underscoring of the role of hermeneutics and linguistic interpretation, or understanding. By focusing on meaning (defined as internal to the language system), expression is not produced by an experiential subject but by linguistic events. The subject therefore appears to be shaped by and through language (the paternal and symbolic language of the Other). Another view of the speaking subject emerging from the linguistic turn suggests "an ambiguous zone where the expressive intent is driven and guided by the received linguistic resources, thinks according to

[21] This is the view expressed by John Sturrock in *Structuralism* when he argues that, "Many of us like to think that when we use language we control it more or less totally and that it is we who determine the sequence of words or thoughts each time we write or speak; we are not happy to allow that language itself can prove more powerful than we are and that the association of the signs we have already used may be determining the choice of the signs to come. This loss of authority in the 'speaking subject' or language-user is a most important and contentious aspect of structuralism, exploited to its full extent in post-structuralism […] and it can be traced back to this insistence of Saussure that the language-system impinges at every moment on language-events" (Sturrock, 2003: 43).

them, but not necessarily by reiterating worn-out clichés" (Stawarska, 2014: 4). Here, the speaking subject is thought to borrow from the all-powerful language system, even making these words his/her own, albeit without ever being able to truly lay claim to them.[22] Language expression here is not a matter of conflict between the structure and the speaker; rather, expression exemplifies a separation caused by a chiasm that occurs by virtue of entangled forces. Lyotard, Kristeva and Deleuze, as we shall see, will think anew what it means to be an experiential subject, a phenomenological subject and a linguistic subject, by redefining language and the image in terms of affect.

In its recent history, then, the theory of the image has taken one of two paths: it is associated on the one hand with representation and language (taken to be discursive as in Descartes), and on the other hand it is linked to the body and the sensory. In emphasising the affective image, Lyotard, Deleuze and Kristeva belong to the second group of writers. In their work on affect they emphasise the image as the site of affect and as that which produces affect. The image is granted an important and central role in their individual analyses of affect. Their understanding follows an Aristotelian line of thought, distinguishing between images that are discursive and refer to conscious thought processes and perception, as well as defining a different sort of image – an affective bodily image that is thought to adhere to unconscious operations of the body and the mind. It is Aristotle who, in questioning the nature of images, asked whether

[22] The theory of the subject that Stawarska has in mind here relies on Jonathon Culler's reading of Kristeva's subject in process and the claim that, "The speaking subject does not map onto the ego of transcendental phenomenology, this 'penitentiary' subject walled into the prison of knowledge and better associated with the ideal of a metalanguage than the language in actu" (Culler, 2006: 33). According to Stawarska, "While Kristeva positions this speaking subject in opposition to Saussure's linguistics and its offspring, I argue that Saussure's own lesser known reflections help to chart the very zone of linguistic experience undecided between renewing subjectivity and sedimented signification that I believe Kristeva charts in her own map of the semiotic and symbolic relations" (Stawarska, 2014: 4-5). Though I agree with Stawarska's main contention, which is to position or even align Saussure's linguistics with Kristeva's theory of the semiotic and the symbolic (which I will be discussing further down), my own reading differs, in that I do not regard Kristeva as positioning her speaking subject in opposition to Saussure's linguistics in the first place. Instead, I argue that it is in fact Kristeva's own revisions of Saussure's language theory – and in particular her return to his anagrammatic work and poetic language – that lead her to redefine language as heterogeneity and the subject as a subject in process.

they could be thought of as either pictorial or linguistic (or both). The images of *aesthesis* (affective images) are reconceived in Lyotard, Deleuze and Kristeva's accounts and move past phenomenological descriptions by arguing that they are pre-signifying and pre-subjective. These thinkers thereby no longer associate images with language but with affect. In redefining the image in these terms, they are able to consider what is behind the mechanisms that create perception, thought and language. Whereas the representational image is viewed as the remains of a process that is concealed from conscious awareness, the affective image in contrast deals with the processes of unconscious perception prior to the separation that the former creates between the body and the mind. In fact, as we have seen, this latter feature of affective images is common to all writers of affect. In affect theories, the body is treated as intelligent and sentient, and it is the connection between the body and mind that incites cognitive processes and the new in language and thought. The affective bodily image acts as a type of judgment (a minimal signal that indicates pain or pleasure) that is meaningful in its own right.[23] In consciousness, however, the affective image is perceived as a 'confused idea', since its language differs from that of signification. To put it differently, an affective image emerges as a mark of difference (a contrast or resistance) that mobilises differential thoughts by challenging an ideological or discursively formed idea held by a particular subject. As we shall see in the following chapters, the affect-image is both a mark within language and a process, or what Deleuze and Lyotard name the 'figural' and Kristeva the 'semiotic chora'. This involves an engagement with everything that occurs prior to signification, thought and perception, and explains how the structures of consciousness and language come about. As mentioned already, it is commonly held in recent affect theory that the affective turn

[23] It therefore differs from the *objet petit a* that Lacan discusses in various works as the object cause of desire that is essentially nothing (see later).

comes about as a reaction to the linguistic turn – and in particular to Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of language and Lacan's reading thereof. It is interesting to note, however, that some of the arguments for the affective turn in the three writers I discuss here, are formulated, as we shall see, around readings of Ferdinand de Saussure.

The Affective Turn and Ferdinand de Saussure

In this section I will briefly outline how Lyotard, Deleuze and Kristeva receive Saussure's work during the latter years of the 1960s and early 1970s. In contrast to structuralist accounts, which have emphasised his language theory as a homogenous and closed system of signs, I propose that their engagement and revisions of his work help formulate and become the basis upon which they build their own theories of affect, both in its linguistic and its phenomenological aspects.[24] They each illustrate that on a narrower and more empirical level of explicit references in Saussure's work, a different picture begins to emerge. Saussure was not the founder of linguistic rigidity; instead, there is a non-structuralist, more playful and lesser-known Saussure, who influences their own thought on language and affect. First, I turn to Lyotard's reading of the *Course in General Linguistics* (1916) in *Discourse, Figure*.

Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye published Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* in 1916, in collaboration with Albert Riedlinger. The nature of how this book was put together presents a number of difficulties, given that it is the result of a collection of hand-written notes taken down by Saussure's students in lectures that were given between 1907 and 1909 at the University of Geneva. In the reception of *Course in*

[24] The structuralist view of Saussure's theory of language focuses on his theory of *langue* (see later). Paul Bouissac claims, "*langue*, as a language system is a homogeneous entity that can be the object of a science" (Bouissac, 2010: 20). Yet Saussure illustrates that beyond his theory of *langue*, language as a whole - *langage* - is not a homogeneous entity since, it includes and involves many and diverse aspects. As mentioned previously for a recent re-reading of Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*, and its relation to phenomenology, see Beata Stawarska's *Saussure's Philosophy of Language: Undoing the Doctrine of Course in General Linguistics* (2014).

General Linguistics, Saussure had been emphasised as a systemic thinker of structures. In *Discourse, Figure*, Lyotard claims that this is the result of the editors' structuralist reading and emphasis on his work on *langue.*[25] This reading focuses on the part of his thought that is formulated in terms of oppositional pairs inflected with a metaphysics of presence. In *Discourse, Figure*, Lyotard suggests that the homogeneous view of language attributed to Saussure results from confusing what he understands as signification (received language) with Saussure's conception of language as a whole (*langage*). He argues instead that language in Saussure is in fact doubly constituted and therefore heterogeneous, that is, shaped by external experience and external reality. He claims that the reality of social convention as it is transmitted and revised over time makes its way into language via *parole*, an argument which is made possible by a return to the Saussurean notion of arbitrariness. Lyotard suggests that arbitrariness is not a property of individual signs but rather it extends right across the entire system of language, through the relations and differences between them and is defined in positive terms by virtue of a historicised conventional pattern of usage (rather than purely negatively defined by lack of motivation). According to Lyotard, the editors' view of Saussure's notion of *parole* as produced by *langue*, and the rigid distinction between *parole* (diachrony) and *langue* (synchrony) showing them to be oppositional and violent hierarchies, necessitates a re-reading. Lyotard instead (as I will show) re-conceptualises *parole* in terms of the affective voice of discourse or poetic language (and opposes it to signification/*langue*). Saussure's original manuscripts illustrate that language is doubly

[25] Lyotard is among a number of writers to express discontent with the publication of Saussure's *Course*. In fact, of the three editors mentioned above, only Riedlinger attended these classes and expressed disappointment in the final product (Stawarska, 2014: 32). Lyotard frequently cites from Robert Godel, who revised the original manuscripts noting the editors' discrepancies in *Sources Manuscrites* (1957). Other writers who revisit source material in order to counter the canonised reading of Saussure are Engler in *Édition Critique* (1967) and more recently Paul Thibault in *Re-Reading Saussure: The Dynamics of Signs in Social Life* (2006) and Beata Stawarska in *Saussure's Philosophy of Language as Phenomenology* (2014).

articulated and constituted through an exchange with phenomenology that pushes his concept towards a theory of the unconscious.[26]

In *Discourse Figure*, Lyotard returns to Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* by revisiting the original manuscripts. He argues that it is the distinction between the signifier and the signified which has helped formulate the structuralist view that language is a closed and autonomous system of signs. The overemphasised role of the signifier in this account is thought to collect signification solely by virtue of contrastive relations of difference to other signs within a structure system.[27] The notion of arbitrariness in Saussure is therefore attributed to the internal relations that constitute the sign, between signifier (acoustic image) and signified (the concept), while the referent is thought to be excluded from this formulation. In what follows I will take a closer look at Lyotard's return to the Saussurean notion of arbitrariness and the status of the sign.

In connecting the signifier, the graphic or acoustic sign to the signified (idea) in an arbitrary relation that is unmotivated by reality, the differentiation between them establishes the autonomy of language with respect to reality.[28] Therefore, the

[26] Starwaska claims that "In contrast to the institutionalised antagonisms between phenomenological and structure-based approaches within which the Course is received in post war France, Saussure's own reflections on language grew on a terrain saturated with phenomenological references and largely conciliatory" (Starwaska, 2014: 18). She goes on to note that Saussure's linguistics were influenced by Baudouin de Courtnay and Mikolaj Kruszewski, whose idea was to develop "something like a phenomenology of language" (Starwaska, 2014: 18).

[27] This leads to Saussure's infamous assertion that "in language there are only differences *without positive terms*" (Saussure, 2011: 120). This is the version of Saussurean theory that has been seen to have influenced Lacan's work and his revision of Saussure's theory of language in psychoanalytic terms. According to Dylan Evans, "Thus for Lacan language is not a system of signs (as it was for Saussure) but a system of signifiers. Signifiers are the basic units of language, and they are 'subjected to the double condition of being reducible to ultimate differential elements and of combining according to the laws of a closed order' (E, 152). By the phrase 'reducible to ultimate differential elements', Lacan follows Saussure in asserting the fundamentally differential character of the signifier. Saussure states that in language there are no positive terms only differences (Saussure, 1916: 120). By the phrase 'combining according to the laws of a closed order' asserts that signifiers are combined in signifying chains according to the laws of metonymy" (Evans, 2006: 189).

[28] See John Sturrock's *Structuralism* (2003: 36) and Roy Harris' Introduction to *Course in General Linguistics* (1986: x).

arbitrariness of the sign is typically read as evidence of the structuralist view of language as a closed and autonomous system of internal relations. Signification is emphasised as emerging solely within the structured system and leads to a hierarchy of the signifier over the signified which causes signification to appear as nothing more than an effect of contrastive relations between (signifying) entities such as words, gestures and images and not as a result of their inherent expressive force. Hence, in structuralist accounts of Saussure's theory of language, (and in particular Lacan's revision of it) it is not the category of the sign but the narrower category of the signifier that gains primacy, for the signifier's authority is only ever constrained by its relations with other signifiers within the system, while the system itself is not constricted by anything of a different nature. Any consideration of the signified as transcendent to the signifier is thereby dismissed, and access to reality, or the real, is continually barred by the (arbitrary) un-signifiable barrier between the signifier and the signified. In contrast, Lyotard argues that the internal relationship of the sign is not arbitrary. He suggests that the source materials emphasise that the two elements that constitute the sign are both in the subject. Therefore, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is inevitably mediated by a speaking subject, to whom the sign must signify something, in order for it to signify anything at all. Hence, to argue that this relation forms a purely objective process regulated by language itself, and that the sign is capable of signifying in and of itself, is to view arbitrariness in his work as a purely privative concept that lacks determination. Yet, even in this model of arbitrariness, there exists a pre-existent (dual) signified as both: thing (referent) and an idea of the thing (that consequently receives a linguistic label).[29] Saussure asserts that the signifier and signified come into

[29] Roman Jakobson makes a similar claim. He states that, "The arbitrariness of the sign is a blatant contradiction with the most valuable and fertile ideas of Saussure's linguistics. This idea would have us believe that different languages use a variety of signifiers to correspond to one common and unvarying signified, but it was already Saussure himself who… correctly defended the view that meanings of words

existence at the same time and therefore cannot be separated, though they can however be distinguished like two sides of the same sheet of paper. In order to describe the sign in this way, Saussure is thought to bracket out the referent in taking the sign itself as his referent. In Lyotard's reading of the source materials, Saussure's notion of arbitrariness instead challenges a pre-existent order of ideas and things, and in fact extends arbitrariness to the signified, since he argues that its signification (its meaning) emerges from its connection to other signifieds (as well as signifiers) in the system. Here, the rigid distinction between *langue* and *parole* and signified and referent collapses. Lyotard writes:

> It is one thing for the signifier *mouton* to be exchangeable for the signifier *mouton* in order to determine its value's aspect of signification; but it is only when the signifier is compared to another signifier – *sheep* – that it will receive its exact, clear value. In the last case, one recognises the measured opposition, the product of the constant intervals in the plane of the linguistic grid, while the exchange of 'sound' pattern for the 'concept' belongs to the oral communication that Saussure took as the starting point for his reflection, and which obviously illustrates not the system of language [*langue*] but the experience of the situation of speech (Lyotard, 2011: 92).

According to Lyotard, in the example that compares 'mutton' to 'sheep', Saussure had illustrated that the two have different values. Whereas English differentiates between mouton (dead/meat) and sheep (alive/animal), French does not do the same. In other words, arbitrariness cannot be limited to the elements of an isolated sign, since each sign intersects (gets crossed) as a result of its relations (and differences) with other signs in the language system (*langage*). Lyotard argues that Saussure had in fact submitted an extensive critique of such a view and connected linguistic arbitrariness primarily to the entire language system and secondarily to the socio-historic community of language users. He states that "Mallarmé's poetics seem to bring about to completion the fundamental property of language, which Saussure was developing at the same time,

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themselves vary from one language to another […] Saussure himself cites "difference in value" between the French 'mouton' and the English 'sheep' […] There is no meaning in and by itself […] In language there is neither signified without signifier nor, signifier without signified" (Jakobson, 1978: 11)

namely, the sign's arbitrariness in relation to the object that it signifies" (Lyotard, 2011: 62). He maintains that the referent pointed out in a specific act of *parole* (Lyotard calls this *deixis*) allows for an irruption on the flat surface of the system in the deep space of perception. Hence, the depth Saussure is thereby led to attribute to the sign is not specific to the sign but is a property of the act of reference. In the collapse of the distinction between *langue*/*parole* and signified/referent, the deictic appears as an index and not as a sign. In other words, Lyotard (in his reading of Saussure) argues that language is not constituted by signs, but insofar that it designates objects and presents these objects as signs with both a manifest and a hidden sign, language and the sign become entangled in the transcendental negativity of the distance between depth and movement. I will return to this issue shortly in a discussion on synchrony and diachrony, but first it is worth considering briefly Lyotard's revision of structuralist readings of Saussure's theory of language.

Double Essence

Lyotard argues that the theory of *langue* (signification) that is emphasised in structuralist readings of Saussure is often mistakenly understood as his theory of language (*langage*) as a whole. Language is not merely a rule-governed system in Saussure, and to treat it this way is to fail to account for the temporal dimension that he gives to a given position in a particular arrangement. *Langue* is the study of contemporary arrangements in a given language, and *parole* involves the individual changes that occur at any given time. In the structuralist account provided by the editors of Saussure's *Course*, these are viewed as two separate methods where synchrony and la *langue* are treated as primary. Lyotard claims:

> The editors of Saussure's *Course* lay considerable stress on the duality of axes required to think signification through: 'The paradoxical part of it is this: On the one hand, the concept appears to be just the counterpart of a sound pattern, as one constituent part of a

> linguistic sign. On the other hand, the linguistic sign itself, as the link uniting the two constituent elements, likewise has counterparts. These are the other signs in the language [*langue*]" (Lyotard, 2011: 92).

The editors of the *Course* regard *la langue* as a complete system that is detached from speaking subjects and as being opposed to *langage*. Saussure, however, does not treat language as subjectless and closed. Language (*langage*) is inseparable from particular language acts (acts of *parole*) performed by speakers. *La langue* is merely the ensemble of amiable forms which this phenomenon assumes in a collectivity of individuals at a given time, and it is neither a closed system nor outside of speaking subjects. In fact, isolating *la langue* from phenomenal reality is not a Saussurean idea, since he suggests contrastively that the relationship between *la langue* and *langage* (the system and speech acts) is reciprocal. According to Lyotard, Saussure's theory of language is instead heterogeneous; it is doubly constituted and the original manuscripts show that he views language as a 'phenomenon' in relation to a subject. In addition, speech acts do not merely represent and instantiate, but they also produce stable and identifiable patterns and are therefore productive as well as reproductive. What this means is that the rules governing the system of *la langue* are shaped retroactively by the practice of speech acts. Lyotard maintains:

> The object in question is in fact the space in which discourse operates, and the proposed thesis is that this space is not homogeneous, but doubled: on the one hand, the space of discontinuity where signification takes shape (on the model of the signifier); on the other, the space of designation that surrounds discourse and opens it to its reference. Ferdinand de Saussure's importance in this regard is obvious. He formulates the concept of arbitrariness or unmotivation of the linguistic 'sign': the latter is opposed to another sign as what is 'instituted' to what is 'natural,' or as what is 'unmotivated' to what is 'motivated (Lyotard, 2011: 72).

For Lyotard the source manuscripts illustrate that *la langue* and *la parole* are interdependent, and he contends that Saussure insisted on the doubly faceted character of any object in linguistics. These, however, are not to be regarded as two distinct (or

complete in themselves) modalities incapable of affecting one another but rather that language is constituted by a double essence, primarily because the object itself is by nature inextricably dual, as is the subject who uses language. According to Lyotard, these refer to two directions of meaning that intersect the linguistic sign. He writes:

> The sign is constituted by two facets, inseparable in practical use […] and whose adjoining determines signification proper. This is Saussure's specific term for the effect of meaning produced when the concept or signified merges with what he calls the sound pattern or signifier. On the other hand, the linguistic sign taken as a whole (as it is in fact), relates to what it designates, to a real or unreal object about which the speaker is speaking (Lyotard, 2011: 77).

The relationship between the signifier and signified is what has led to the understanding that Saussure held language to be constituted by "differences without positive terms." Lyotard argues that this only holds true if we take the signifier and the signified separately. When considering the sign as a whole, we encounter something positive. This positivity is only ever invoked between signifiers that is, between the sign and its referent that collapses the distinction between *langue* and *parole*. He states that "Speech faces its object, opens on to it, at the very least through a kind of sight […] In this respect every speech act is a means of adducing something that is not in language [*langue*], that cannot find its place within the utterance, but which stands, as its impregnable theme, in the opening of discourse" (Lyotard, 2011: 72). Here, the two levels of meaning that cross the sign are distinguished as opposition and designation, and he notes that for Saussure the word does not differ from the sign on account of its arbitrariness but rather "the word does not belong to the semiological sphere, but is tangential to it" (Lyotard, 2011: 72). Although speech acts are thought to be an actualisation of *langue*, he posits that "every speech act speaks of something. It is an essential characteristic of articulated language that it should always have a referential function, and this is the characteristic one should recognise in the Saussurean notion of arbitrariness" (Lyotard, 2011: 72-3). Additionally, Lyotard argues that when faced with

the spoken chain, “we hear meaning and, meaning is again what we pronounce as our mouth articulates the sounds: such is our experience of words” (Lyotard, 2011: 78). Hence, in contrast to the structuralist view that the arbitrary linguistic sign in Saussure determines the autonomy of language with respect to reality, the sign in Lyotard’s reading is instead motivated by forces within the language system and by social and temporal forces that are external to the sign system. Here, language is alterable (in process) and open (to change).

Synchrony and Diachrony

The distinction between the two facets of language arises in relation to the two perspectives of the synchronic and the diachronic. Whereas the former describes immediate linguistic sense (*langue*), the latter relates to mediated access that is dependent on historical knowledge of linguistic developments of the past (and relates to *parole*). This distinction, according to Lyotard, maps on to the consciousness of language and its unknown and unconscious side. In contrast to structuralist readings, he insists that Saussure’s source manuscripts illustrate both the distinction and the relation between the two, in that although synchrony and diachrony are two distinct facets of language, they are also reciprocal. *La langue*’s synchronicity is itself always retroactively formed and always pre-laden with tradition (undecided between past and present). Saussure uses optical metaphors to show both perspectives. In the first metaphor (which includes a graphic illustration of a cone-shaped light that is projected onto a flat surface) synchronicity figures as a flat projection of a historical reality while the diachronic features as a projected body; the synchronic element in this formulation is the representation of the diachronic on a flat plane. Here, the projected image is dependent on the body but also firmly fixes the possibility of studying projections

independently of any reference to the body itself. In the second optical metaphor the inherent unity between the two is made more apparent, as synchronicity and diachronicity are played out in the same body, pictured as a stem that can be sectioned both horizontally (cross-wise) and vertically (lengthwise). The horizontal section of the stem reveals the vertical arrangement of its fibres and the vertical their growth over time. In this schema, diachrony is the horizontal section that reveals and follows the length of the fibre along the growth of the stem. Both patterns (the horizontal and vertical sections) can only reveal a partial view of a complex object, but the two together form a unitary reality that is often passed over when looking at either the one or the other in isolation. The distinction between synchrony and diachrony illustrates how language brings into focus one of the two while leaving the other one temporarily out of sight.

The editors of the *Course* (in particular Charles Bally) read Saussure, in contrast, as adopting a polarised distinction between the immediate data of singular thought (*parole*) and the objective reality of linguistic symbolism (*langue*) mapping it onto language (*langage*). Bally considers *parole* as subjective, affectively laden and as singular expression, while *langue* is an objective and rational system; the polarisation transpires as the difference between expression and communication. Although Lyotard appears to hold on to the distinction, he does not agree with Bally that the two are at odds with one another, and instead he argues that Saussure had illustrated their interdependence. Communication in *Discourse, Figure* is not enacted at the expense of expression. Rather the same language takes hold of both the affective charge and the vitality of the subject's experience through *parole* as well as the signifying units that enable communication. This pre-linguistic (or extra-linguistic) datum that Bally

discovers is not removed from the concrete reality of the corresponding affects but is, according to Lyotard, what moves language in the first place.

Lyotard shows that the source material insists on viewing language (*langage*) as a phenomenon; in fact, Saussure's analysis draws on the phenomenological tradition associated with Hegel. In particular, his comments about speech acts running throughout the *Course* emphasise the role of the subject, revealing a very different Saussure than the one associated with structuralism. This Saussure is interested in distinguishing not only between the internal phenomena and external phenomena of language and the conscious and unconscious processes that these entail, but also the relationship between them. Lyotard argues that speech (*parole*) is related to the openness of discourse, that speech always speaks or refers to something, and he thereby stresses the immanent character of the referential function that is opened up through a kind of sight that he explains is of the unconscious kind. Here, *parole* is redefined by Lyotard as a sensory event that belongs to "an order *other* than itself" (Lyotard, 2011: 74). This positioning, he tells us, is not that far away from what Saussure had posed as the problem of the linguistic sign. Saussure specified that he did not want to suggest that the speaker has the authority to shape sounds and words at will but rather that the sign is inseparable from a rift, a chiasm through which "being and appearing, meaning and the sensory, are cleaved; in this way it cannot be reduced to a certain relation between two terms, but is 'the generating principle of all relations, of all possible forms'" (Lyotard, 2011: 74). The sign, defined by its referential function (of transcendence), "'shows something' or brings something to light understood that the absent thing thus presented cannot be presented in person" (Lyotard, 2011: 74). *Parole* is therefore surprisingly redefined by Lyotard as being associated with what he calls the affective voice or expression and what relates to the figure-form in *Discourse, Figure*. Next, I turn to

Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Saussure's theory of language, which is in fact informed to a great extent by *Discourse, Figure.*

Deleuze and Guattari

In *Anti-Oedipus,* Deleuze and Guattari are also critical of the notion of language formulated by structuralist interpretations of Saussure. Their discussion develops with reference to and in accordance with Lyotard's re-reading of the original manuscripts of Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* in *Discourse, Figure*. The significance of Lyotard's understanding rests on his reading of arbitrariness, as seen above, while structuralism emphasises the system of *langue* and the notion of the sign as a closed system. In particular it is important to reiterate that the Lacanian reading of Saussure is thought to place the signifier over the signified, while the referent is bracketed and cut off from this relationship. According to Deleuze and Guattari, in structuralist readings of the system of *langue*, the signifier reduces the signified to a system of non-referential differences (what Lyotard redefines as oppositions), and arbitrariness refers to the relationship between signifiers cut off from the reality of *parole*. The emergence of the signifier (acoustic image) here coincides with the signified (concept) in a closed system of discursive images that form representations. However, Lyotard (as we have seen) argues that arbitrariness extends to the notion of the signified but more importantly to langage in its entirety and thus between *langue* and *parole*. Saussure, according to Lyotard, instead placed the signified over the signifier and therefore understands the former to be at the surface, whereas what lies beneath it is the signifier (acoustic image). In this formulation, the sign taken as a whole is therefore determined by the signified's referential function (its transcendence), which collapses the rigid distinction between *langue* and *parole* and illustrates instead the interaction and reciprocal relationship

formed between the two. The sign, then, in this reading is defined by its referential function and by its ability to both hide and reveal the object that it designates. Lyotard therefore treats as pivotal the "double aspect" of the sign in both its paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes, and Deleuze and Guattari too observe a second dimension to Saussure's linguistic theory. They claim:

> Ferdinand de Saussure does not *merely* emphasise the following: that the arbitrariness of language establishes its sovereignty, as a servitude or a generalised slavery visited upon the 'masses'. It has also been shown that two dimensions exist side by side in Saussure: the one horizontal, where the signified is reduced to the value of coexisting minimal terms into which the signifier decomposes; but the other vertical, where the signifier is elevated to the concept corresponding to the acoustic image – that is, to the voice, taken in its maximum extension, which recomposes the signifier ('value' as the opposite of the coexisting terms, but also the 'concept' as the opposite of the acoustic image) (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 207; my emphasis).

Deleuze and Guattari agree with Lyotard that *langue* should not be taken as Saussure's theory of language and that his notion of arbitrariness cannot be attributed to the internal relationships within signs but rather runs across the entire system of language and the user of language. What Lyotard shows in *Discourse, Figure* is that *langue* is in fact the horizontal (diachronic) study of language, where words are understood in a linear manner through word derivation or etymology (I will discuss this in more detail in the following chapter). However, *parole* is situated on the same side of affect as voice (and as what escapes the system of *langue*) that Lyotard argues can only be studied synchronically, that is, as an event tied to a particular time, albeit without reference to historical context. The vertical or synchronic study of language shows that every sign is constituted in depth as random events tied to particular points in time (and not in the historical time of diachrony).

Deleuze and Guattari, who also establish a view of language which is heterogeneous, argue that Saussure's theory of language is indeed doubly constituted, as Lyotard himself has mentioned, since they contend that there can be no linguistic theory

without bi-univocal relations. Whether that may be between phonetic and ideographic values or (between articulations at different levels like) monemes and phonemes these ensure the independence of the deterritorialised sign (the notion of deterritorialisation will be viewed in detail in Chapter Three). They state that in Saussure, "the signifier appears twice, once in the chain of elements in relation to which the signified is always a signifier for another signifier, and a second time in the detached object on which the whole of the chain depends, and that spreads over the chain the effects of signification" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 207). Whereas the first description explains the mechanisms of signification (and is the interpretation that is often associated with Lacan), the latter, as we have seen in the previous section, is a (non-linguistic) sign that enters through language via *parole* and presents itself as an event while remaining autonomous to the system of language. In fact, as we shall see in the following chapters, this is what all three writers discussed herein call the 'affect event' (index). Lyotard identifies language as being defined by the transcendence of an irreducible exteriority that postulates throughout the system the inarticulate material flux in which it operates. However, it is this element of transcendence that essentially leads Deleuze and Guattari to part with this view of language.

Deleuze and Guattari's critique of structuralist readings of Saussure is in part directed at Jacques Lacan and in particular at his theory of the unconscious that he reconfigures in linguistic terms and has effects on his theory of the subject. They claim that the signifier in Saussure implies a language that over-codes another language; this other affective voice (that can be thought of as unconscious) is completely coded into phonetic elements. They then contend that the signified is what lies at both the "borders" and the "interior," therefore not only occupying a space in the centre of language and a space opened up by desire, but also residing at the limits of language. In

an effort to contrast their view with that of Lacan, they argue that "if the unconscious in fact includes the topical order of a double inscription, it is not structured like one language, but like two" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 208). As already mentioned previously, Deleuze and Guattari are referring to a particular reading of Lacan's work that is thought to enclose both the unconscious and subjectivity (identity formation) within the realm of language. Although this reading of Lacan may appear outdated and is gradually becoming redundant and replaced by contemporary Lacanian scholars like Lorenzo Chiesa mentioned earlier, it seems to be the most common or prominent reading of Lacan's work at the time that Deleuze and Guattari were writing this book (as both Lyotard and Kristeva also show).[30] The linguistic theory mobilised in the *Anti-Oedipus*, however, re-situates language as a field of *immanence*. They claim "Saussurean linguistics, […] in effect discovers a field of immanence constituted by 'value' – i.e., by the system of relations among ultimate elements of the signifier" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 241-2). The field of immanence attributed to Saussure's work is constituted by difference, while the relation between the elements of the signifier reveals language as a process, a *becoming.* Nonetheless, in order to ground this concept of language as a field of immanence and as becoming without reference to transcendence, Deleuze and Guattari seek to go beyond Saussure's conceptual framework, albeit in favour of someone who, as has been often demonstrated, was hugely influenced by Saussure. Deleuze and Guattari's extensive use of the linguistics of Louis Hjelmslev allows them to mark their differences from the approaches of both Lyotard and Kristeva.[31]

[30] According to Alan D. Schrift in *Postructuralism and Critical Theory's Second Generation*, "the theoretical claims of psychoanalysis get redefined in a radical manner in France throughout the late 1960s and 1970s. Lacan's central thesis that the Unconscious is 'structured like a language' indexed the constitution of the subject to a structuralist principle of signification." (Schrift, 2010: 314)

[31] See Louis Hjelmslev in *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, (1969). I will not be taking up a review of Louis Hjelmslev's linguistics here. However, it is important to note that Deleuze and Guattari find his

Kristeva

Two years prior to *Discourse, Figure*, Julia Kristeva had already revisited Saussure's work on anagrams, giving particular importance to his notion of the paragram.[32] Her short essay "Towards a Semiology of Paragrams" (1969) suggests that Saussure's literary semiology goes beyond what was thought to be the inherent limitations of structuralism, its perception as a static and ahistorical study of language practices. It is not only this short essay that suggests Saussure's influence on her thought, since, as John Lechte points out, "Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of anagrams in poetic language is often cited throughout Kristeva's *oeuvre*, but only rarely commented on at any length" (Lechte, 1990: 76). In fact, what her readers often point out is that her work on 'intertextuality', a term first used in 1966 and which later developed through a number of different terms, including the notion of signifiance that I discuss in Chapter Four, illustrates the strong impact that Saussure had on her thought and the development of her conception of "poetic language."

The term 'intertextuality' was first used by Kristeva in *Word, Dialogue and Novel* (1966) and in *The Bounded Text* (1966-67).[32] The notion identifies the text "as a dynamic site in which relational processes and practices are the focus of analysis instead of static structures and products" (Clayton and Rothstein, 1991: 268). Intertextuality develops through a discussion on literary language. She claims:

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understanding of language preferable, since it is in line with their rejection of both transcendence and the category of transgression. Rather, Hjelmslev in his language theory argues for a purely immanent process.

[32] In 1964, Saussure's *Anagrammes* had been partly edited by Jean Starobinski (including a commentary) and later published in 1971 as *Les Mots sous le mots* ('*Words upon Words*).

[32] In *Intertextuality* (2011) Graham Allen observes that although it is Kristeva that first coined the term intertextuality, it already exists as a theory in Saussure and semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin's work in literary theory. He suggests that "Since neither Saussure nor Bakhtin employs the term, most people wish to credit Julia Kristeva with being the inventor of 'intertextuality'. Kristeva, as we shall observe, is influenced by both Bakhtinian and Saussurean models and attempts to combine their insights and major theories" (Allen, 2011: 11).

> The word's status is defined horizontally (the word in the text belongs to both writing subject and addressee) as well as vertically (the word in the text is oriented toward an anterior or) synchronic literary corpus. […] Hence horizontal axis (subject-addressee) and vertical axis (text-context) coincide, bringing to light an important fact: each word (text) is an intersection of words (texts) where at least one of the words (text) can be read. […] The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic discourse is read as at least double (Kristeva, 1980: 66).

Hence, Kristeva, like Deleuze and Lyotard, takes Saussurean linguistics to propose a more dynamic view of language and text than is often attributed to him. What becomes the main source of her theory of intertextuality is the way Saussure underpins and develops the notion of discourse as double. According to Kristeva, the minimal unit of poetic language is at least double, "not in the sense of the signifier/signified dyad, but rather in terms of one and other" (Kristeva, 1980: 69) What Saussure's paragrammatic semiotics, and Bakhtin's work on the carnival show, is that poetic language escapes the logic of the zero-one sequence that refers to signification and the opposition identified within the system of *langue* (true-false, nothingness-notation *etc.*). This logic is incapable of accounting for the operation of poetic language. The notion of difference that interests her is contrasted to the oppositional differences inherent to language required to produce referential meaning. Her view of difference moves instead towards what is often emphasised in the field of pragmatics as an index. It is significant to note that the index, although devoid of referential meaning, encodes a pragmatic meaning that in Kristeva's work, as well as Lyotard's, denotes a shift towards a kind of phenomenology of language that emphasises how language comes about, as opposed to the polysemic aspect of meaning-making within pre-established linguistic structures. This reading of Saussure prompts Kristeva to delve into 'spatialisation', in the non-linear nature of textuality (Kristeva, 1980: 69). The focus on "poetic language" throughout her earlier work derives from a reading of Saussure's work on anagrams.

Accepting the principles stated by Saussure in his *anagrams*, she argues that "poetic language adds a second mode of being, an artificial, supplementary mode of being, so to speak, to the original mode of the word," and for this reason "poetic language" is doubly articulated (Kristeva, 1969b: 25). The construction of anagrams is a way of reading-writing that doubles the text. She views the characteristic composition of literary texts as defined by two incompatible features: openness and closure. Kristeva posits:

> The literary text presents itself as a system of multiple connections that could be described as a structure of paragrammatic networks. By paragrammatic networks we mean tabular (non-linear) model of the elaboration of a literary image, in other words, the dynamic and spatial graphism designating, in poetic language, the multi-determination of meaning (different from the semantic and grammatical norms of ordinary language). The term network replaces univocity (linearity) by encompassing it, and suggests that each set (sequence) is the outcome and the beginning of a plurivalent relation. In this network, the elements will be presented as the peaks of a graph (as in König's theory), enabling us to formalize the symbolic operation of language as a dynamic mark, as a moving 'gram' (hence as a paragram) which *makes* rather than *expresses* a meaning. (Kristeva, 1969b: 32; emphasis in original).

According to Kristeva, the phonetic material that is distributed across the linguistic surface of a text conceals another text, "or at least one other peak, so that the semiological problem will be to find a formalization of this dialogic relation" (Kristeva, 1969b: 32). Saussure named the latent text deciphered from the manifest text's linguistic signifiers "the theme," which, in poetic language, Kristeva states, is the starting point for creating a manifest poetic (or literary) text. Constructing anagrams therefore involves a rigorous questioning, not only of the signifier's linearity, but also the view that a literary image is constructed by a single code. She illustrates that the paragram is a form of spatialisation that consists of a dual or multiple codes that are erratic and unpredictable.

What interests Kristeva in Saussure's paragrams is reframing the question of the text as an open productivity, as opposed to a finished product; that is, what makes a text

emerge, rather than what a text means. Kristeva claims that "all texts of the space that the author reads function in the paragram of the text" (Kristeva, 1980: 69). The paragram in Saussure is not another structure that is subordinated hierarchically to the structure of language; instead, the spatialisation involved in the notion of *double* in poetic language is, by her own admission, a complex tabular model that isolates certain partial grams and distinguishes sub-grams within them. She states:

> They are all expansions of the function that organises the text, and if this function is manifest at different levels (phonetic, semic, sequential, ideological) that does not mean that one of these levels is dominant or primordial (in time or as value). The differentiation of function is an operative diachronization of a synchrony: the expansion of a theme word described by Saussure. This function is specific to every type of writing. In all poetic writing, however, it has an invariable property: it is dialogical and its minimal interval is 0 to 2. Mallarme had already formulated this notion of the Book as a writing organised by a topological dyadic function, discernible at every level of the transformation and of the structure of the text (Kristeva, 1969b: 32; emphasis in original).

For Kristeva therefore, the logic of difference laid out by Saussure in this anagrammatic work operates differently to the logic of opposition. He distinguishes between the language of communication, which is the focus of his notion of *langue* in *Course in General Linguistics*, and the poetic language of his *Anagrams*. Kristeva argues that the spatialisation created by difference operates within a logical motility as a continuum extending from "0 to 2", where the unit "one" (definition, truth) does not exist in this field. The concept of the sign, that presupposes the hierarchical division between signifier and signified, as well as the notion of definition and determination (the sign "=") cannot be appropriated to poetic language. The logic of poetic discourse, in contrast, involves a transgression, "of linguistic, logical, and social codes […] because it accepts *another law*" (Kristeva, 1980: 71). Poetic discourse presupposes intervention by a speaker as well as an orientation towards the other. The writer addresses another (the writer's distance from herself) and narration is constructed in relation to this other. She states, "The writer is thus the subject of narration transformed by his having

included himself within the narrative system; he is neither nothingness nor anybody" although, "he becomes an anonymity, an absence, a blank space, thus permitting the structure to exist as such. At the very origin of narration, at the very moment when the writer appears, we experience emptiness" (Kristeva, 1980: 74). I will be looking at these issues in further detail in Chapter four, in relation to her notion of the semiotic and the semiotic chora. She argues that for the literary text, zero does not exist because emptiness is replaced by a "one" (a proper name), that is in fact, two-fold (subject and addressee). Hence, in this model, the literary text extends from zero to two by transgressing the one. This relates to speech practice that is always linked to the person who created it and his/her activity. A process, that separates the "word as act, as apodeictic practice, as articulation of difference from the image as representation, as knowledge" and yet "it is the exclusive position of a subject of discourse that provokes the dialogue" (Kristeva, 1980: 81). This dialogue therefore, counts the subject as absent. According to Kristeva, poetic discourse is fascinated with its own double: its own activity as graphic trace (image-index) that doubles an outside, as well as the logic of opposition that is necessary to identity and define terms.

The paragram allows Kristeva to emphasise the idea that language is constituted in heterogeneity. And that the changes that occur within language are the effect of chance events understood as real differences that include a moving, feeling and phenomenological subject. Articulation consists of crossing the line dividing the signifier and the signified, and in doing so it breaks both down into similar semiotic items that she will later name *signifiance*. This, as we shall see in Chapter Four, is consistent with Kristeva's own view of language as the product of the relationship between the semiotic (its interference in) and the symbolic. Signifiance, transpires on two registers: the semiotic and the symbolic. The semiotic (what can be viewed as an

affective register in her work) is what is responsible for changes and transformations within language and subjectivity (see later) in the social realm. Hence, her work on paragrams is the precursor to what is to come in her later writing. The paragram (an offshoot of the word 'paranomasia') is related etymologically to the word 'pun', which Bergson defined as a sentence or utterance in which "the same sentence appears to offer two independent meanings but is only an appearance, in reality there are two different sentences made up of two different words, but claiming to be one and the same because they have the same sound" (Bergson, 2008: 60). Puns are in fact idiomatic constructions (see Lyotard in the next chapter). The paragram indicates beyond the letter to the phonic patterns of language, or what John Lechte calls "its 'volume' which breaks up the linearity of the signifying chain'" (Lechte, 1990: 78). Paragrams are "figures of anti-semantics," those qualities of language "that escape discourse and commit writing to a vast unintentional reserve" (McCaffery, 2001: 3). The connection between Saussure's anagrams and the unconscious, authorless process that it entails had already been identified by Jean Starobinski. According to Starobinski, "Poetry is not only what realizes itself in words, but what is born on the basis of/in separating itself from words, it escapes the arbitrariness of consciousness to depend henceforth only on a kind of linguistic legality" (Starobinski, 1971: 152-3; cited in Bachner, 2003). Kristeva links the notion of the paragram to the autonomous realm of the affective register and its unconscious operations within the order of language. Her work on paragrams leads to what she charts as her own phenomenological and semiotic-linguistic critical course in *Revolution in Poetic Language*.

For all three writers discussed here Saussure was much more than a systemic writer of oppositions, between language and speech, the signifier and the signified or the synchronic and diachronic. And though he has been canonised as such, Lyotard,

Deleuze and Kristeva's reading of Saussure illustrates a very different picture. In the following chapters we will see that the redefinition of language as a heterogeneity, that they identify in Saussure's work, is integral to the way that they develop their own theories of affect.

Chapter 2: Jean-François Lyotard and the Figural

"What after the fact, I find I have always tried, under diverse headings – work, figural, heterogeneity, dissensus, event, thing – to reserve: [is] the unharmonizable" (Lyotard, 1991: 4).

As Lyotard himself underlines in the foreword to *The Inhuman* (1991) [1988], his work, from his earliest major work *Discourse, Figure,* (2011) [1971] to his most recent *Lectures d'enfance* (1991), is testament to an intense preoccupation with preserving what he refers to as the "unharmonizable," or what he designates more clearly several pages later as the unrepresentable "unconscious affect".[1] Throughout Lyotard's work, affect both precedes and is primary to language; it acts as the silent resistance that operates *within* or *beneath* all logos, all the while remaining outside of it as a self-governing and autonomous realm. This resistance, as we shall see, forms a productive relationship between affect and language that is creative of artworks. The affective register throughout Lyotard's work operates as the irreconcilable and unspeakable other of signification. Affect cannot be captured by language, and this is apparent in Lyotard's own writing, which uses different terms to refer to affect and the affective register, illustrating both its volatile nature and its resistance to being pinned down in the realm of language. Lyotard employs different ways to describe it: as an event in *The Differend*; the metaphor of the affect-phrase in "La Phrase-Affect" and "Lectures d'enfance"; as the inhuman in *The Inhuman* and the figural describes affect as process in *Discourse, Figure* (a term Deleuze will borrow from Lyotard a decade later

[1] In *The Inhuman*, Lyotard argues that what is "unharmonizable" refers to "what Lacan called the Thing, and Freud the unconscious affect, which never let themselves be presented" (Lyotard, 1991: 33).

in 1981's *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*).[2] Given the elusive nature of affect and its resistance to symbolic representation, it is unsurprising that Lyotard acknowledges (admittedly, this is a belated realisation) that he has used diverse terms or "headings," in order to define and describe its effects, thus illustrating vividly the challenge and complexity of naming what is irrevocably irreducible to linguistic signification. I argue here that affect, however slippery and volatile, is the underlying concept at the heart of Lyotard's entire oeuvre.

The significance of affect in Lyotard's work derives from his own resistance to particular notions and views that it re-examines and challenges. I propose that affect in his work serves several purposes. First, it works to dismantle the structuralist notion of language as a homogenous system that operates through binary oppositions.[3] The notion of representation is therefore reconfigured as what is constituted by both signifying elements as well as non-signifying (affective elements) which work together in a productive process. Second, it redefines the notion of the image by explaining the image as conflicting with signification and correlative to affect. He thereby posits that the image is predominantly affective. Third, the concept of affect revisits the notion of subjectivity through the concept of sensation or affection, and it redefines it as a notion of affective 'becoming'. The subject is no longer determined by restrictive structural linguistic positions that determine identity formation that characterises the linguistic subject of structuralism, but it is rather defined through its sensory displacements (movements) created by affect-events. He argues in *Discourse, Figure* that "this displacement is precisely what constitutes the event for me" (Lyotard, 2011: 18).

[2] I will be using each term as it comes up in its specific context; however, 'affect' and 'affective register' will be used as umbrella terms.

[3] In *Discourse, Figure*, Lyotard highlights the limitations of a homogeneous view of language and criticises the inability to comprehend the problem of meaning as anything other than linguistic. Affect, he argues, challenges the identity of language by "dissipating, the current prestige of the system and the closure in which all specialists of language think they can confine all meaning" (Lyotard, 2011: 6).

Lyotard's emphasis on displacement as what constitutes the affect-event poses a significant difference between his and Deleuze's Spinozist understanding thereof, which primarily highlights affect as a relational force (I will come back to this later). As we shall see, I argue that Lyotard's subject is the subject of desire and affect, insofar as desire designates a non-linguistic and irregular force that deconstructs language, perception and understanding.[4] What this means is two things: that the subject's intentionality is regulated by desire (rendering the subject both passive and active) and that the subject itself is a product of affective displacement and (unconscious) libidinal investment.

As I will go on to show, Lyotard appropriates the notion of "unconscious affect" from Freud's psychoanalysis and his definition of affect as both index and process (seen in the previous chapter). These two definitions, as I have already discussed, are often thought to clash; however, as Lyotard illustrates and I will proceed to show, the two are not conflicting ideas in Freud's thought but form a process that involves two different realms, namely the one relating to language (and writing, more particularly) and the other to the realm of images and the visual (extended to his understanding of visual art). For Lyotard the process of affect and its index in language are related to a phenomenology that explains how the new (in thought, language, art, subjectivity and the social) comes about.[5] In the first section of this chapter I address the notion of affect as an index – as it is developed in Lyotard's later work. Affect here is neither made up

[4] As we shall affect as violence and its force as desire correspond to what Deleuze views as deterritorialisation (displacement) and reterritorialisation (the move back into language). I will be viewing this in further detail in the chapter three.

[5] He argues in *Phenomenology* that, "I suggest that every thinking consists in a re-thinking […] Every emergence of something reiterates something else, every recurrence is a recurrence, not at all in the sense that it could repeat the same thing or be the rehearsal or the same play, but in the sense of the Freudian Nachträglich, the way the first offence touches our mind too soon and the second too late, so that the first time is like a thought not yet thought, while the second time is like a not-thought to be thought later" (Lyotard, 1993: 1) These relate to two different trauma events the one he names the figure-image and the second the figure-form that arrives "after the fact". This will be discussed in further detail below.

of language nor can it be articulated through language; instead, it is what underlies all representation as what does not signify and cannot be captured in signification, designating in effect a point where language finds its limits and is confronted with silence. Affect as index is what does violence to the order of representation and is described as what incites language. Affect here is "after the fact" and explained as a belated response, and so Lyotard's confession in *The Inhuman* (above), in relation to his own delayed response in recognising that his work under "various headings" is an attempt to *bear witness* to the irreconcilable affective register, is in fact an inherent property of affect.

Discourse, Figure, Lyotard's thesis and first book, is what he calls a matrix of his aesthetic philosophy of art wherein he develops a theory of images (beyond representation). Here he emphasises the notion of the figural, which explains affect as a process. In addressing the figural as a process, he develops four key terms: the figure, the figure-image, the figure-form and the figure-matrix. To put it simply, the figure is the body (and is affective); the figure-image is an (unconscious) image that the body is capable of capturing prior to consciousness; the figure-form is the belated realisation of a figure-image (registered as trauma) deposited in writing and arriving to consciousness 'after the fact' as excess (or index); while, the figure-matrix is complicit with and the organising principle of the figural. This constitutes affect as a process that always leaves a remainder, and which explains its transmission and re-circulation in the social realm. Lyotard distinguishes the image from language and privileges it as that which captures affect as difference. The object of his interest in this book is the function of the "eye," and he questions what it means to "see," (using examples from literature and visual art) contending that seeing (art) and reading (discourse) are two separate modes of the visual order that operate differently in relation to meaning. The figural is the space taken up by

the figure (body) that gives us objects in their visual density while producing its 'meaning' through gesture or 'sense'. Whereas language aims to communicate and submits the eye to a function of deciphering, art aims to capture the incommunicable and present, the un-representable, revealing the processes of affect and desire that may otherwise remain unseen. The images of art thus produce a discrepancy or a difference that reveals the nature of seeing itself. What makes this position in Lyotard possible is that the image resides in discourse as other, but not as absolutely the other or as an immediate exteriority but rather concurrently in the fields of exteriority and interiority. He argues that it is "both without and within. This is why it holds the secret of connaturality" (Lyotard, 2011: 7). If Lyotard privileges art and visual art in particular, it is because it is capable of revealing the processes of the figural as visual. Images and the images of art, no less, are capable of capturing the singularity of the affect-event more immediately than writing. Lyotard, like Deleuze, emphasises the difference between art and writing (as well as the different roles of the painter and writer); where images capture the force of affect, writing evokes it.

Although I will be addressing the relationship between affect and language, here I want to emphasise the correlative link between affect and images. In his work, the notion of language undergoes a revision that has been emphasised by a number of different writers.[6] However, in this chapter, what I would like to highlight is his revisiting of the notion of the image and its revision as affective. In contrast to the definitions of affect that insist on placing emphasis on feeling, I argue that affect instead emphasises the mind (although the definition of the mind here does not include a mind/body division) and a sentient and intelligent body that operates primarily through

[6] See: Anne Tomiche "Rephrasing the Freudian Unconscious: Lyotard's Affect-Phrase" (1999), Claire Nouvet "The Inarticulate Affect: Lyotard and Psychoanalytic Testimony" (2003) and Kim Bamford in *Lyotard and the Figural in Performance, Art and Writing* (2013). All three of these writers associate Lyotard's notion of affect with the body and feeling.

images. Affect here is not so much a feeling, but a form of judgment that is processed prior to conscious thought. In the last section of this Chapter, I will be looking at how his notion of affect impacts his understanding of subjectivity.

I Affect and Language

Lyotard re-writes the theory of language as a heterogeneous and open system saturated by erratic affective forces at play, opening up the order of meaning to affective depth or difference. He claims "Discourse is always thick. It does not merely signify, but expresses. And if it expresses it is because it too has something trembling within it, enough movement and power to overthrow the table of significations with a quake that produces the meaning" (Lyotard, 2011: 9). For Lyotard, discourse is always constituted by both signification and affect, in that it both signifies and expresses. Furthermore, affect is the "unharmonizable" remainder (or residue) in language that interferes silently and invisibly with linguistic mechanisms by acting on meaning and meaning-making processes.

In *The Differend* (1988), *Misère de la Philosophie* (2000) and *Lectures D'enfance* (1991), Lyotard reframes affect within a pragmatics of phrases. In his reading of Freud's case of Emma in *Misère de la Philosophie*, he treats the 'phrase' as an analogy or metaphor for affect. He coins the term "affect-phrase" and juxtaposes it with the *sentence* (that serves as an analogy for the signifying elements of language), in order to examine the difference between the process of affect and that of signification in the realm of language. Emma's case serves to illustrate the difference between affect and its representation in language.[7] According to Tuija Pulkkinen:

[7] See Sigmund Freud, *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: "A Case of Hysteria," "Three Essays on Sexuality" and Other Works v. 7* (Vintage, 2001). Emma Eckstein was a patient of

> Emma was touched with sexual intention at the age of 8 by a shopkeeper, but only at a later event of a slightly similar situation did she feel the traumatic effect, because, according to Freud at the time of the first, pre-puberty event she was not able to understand the sexual nature of the deed, which then occurred to her at the memory of the event caused by a slightly similar occasion after her puberty. With this case, Lyotard comes up with the notion of pure possibility of being affected, pure in a sense that the possibility of being affected by an event is independent from the possibility of representing the event (Pulkkinen, 2008: 137-8).

What Emma's case illustrates is that affect is always recovered consciously "after the event" or "after the fact". Thereby, illustrating that affect is independent of its representation. I will return to this further down. In "La Phrase-Affect," Lyotard asks how affect can be thought of as a phrase; he asks, "Is a feeling a phrase? And if it is, to what sort of family of phrases does it belong?" (Lyotard, 2000: 45). Speaking about affect in terms of phrases appears to be a peculiar choice, for the term gestures towards grammar and linguistics, and it is used to refer to a syntactic structure that consists of more than one word but lacks the subject-predicate organisation of a clause. However, the term 'phrase', according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, also means a "manner or style of expression" and is a musical term that denotes "a group of notes forming a distinct unit within a longer passage." It is this split meaning of the word that interests Lyotard, for he distinguishes between, on the one hand, the articulate phrase and, on the other hand, the inarticulate phrase. The sentence, or "articulated phrase," is composed of four poles – referent, meaning, addressor and addressee – and it follows a certain procedure or structure which adheres to the rules of language, i.e. someone (addressor) says something (meaning) about something else (referent) to someone (addressee). These four poles are organised on two axes: on the one hand, the semantico-referential axis (reference and meaning) and on the other, the axis of address (the addressor and addressee). An affect-phrase, however, belongs to an entirely different order. Lyotard's

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Freud who he diagnosed with hysteria and later became an analyst herself. Her case has been linked to his theories of primal repression and seduction.

"inarticulate phrase" is made up of non-linguistic units such as a silence, a gesture, a signal or notes of music. He states "A feeling is a phrase. I will call it affect-phrase. It is distinct in being *unarticulated*" (Lyotard, 2000: 45). Affect for Lyotard belongs to the order of the inarticulate, in that it negates the poles that construct the articulated linguistic phrase. He states that what Freud teaches us is that affect is neither addressed, nor referencing nor signifying: "An affective phrase 'says' that there is something, like *da*, here and now, inasmuch as this something is not *nothing*, neither sense, nor referent, nor address" (Lyotard, 1989: 75). Thus, the "inarticulate-phrase" operates differently to the "articulate phrase," since the former escapes the latter's propensity to signify a referent, an address or sense (meaning).[8]

Lyotard takes his definition of affect from Freud's *Three Essays on the theory of Sexuality* (1905) and *On Narcissism* (1914). Affect in Freud is defined as the occurrence of pleasure and/or pain. According to Lyotard, Freudian analysis illustrates that infantile affect has no addressor, and he derives from Freud's theory of primary narcissism the idea that affectivity is originally unaware of the 'I', as primary narcissism is a state prior to the formation of an ego and to the division between the external world and subject, and as a result it is therefore pre-egoic. Hence, affect cannot 'deceive' the ego, because it is prior to any development of an ego.[9] An infant is not an 'I', and therefore affective

[8] When stressing that the "inarticulate phrase" is an index of something and "is not nothing," Lyotard is setting up Freud's affect against what Lacan names the "petit object a." Lacan formulates the petit object a as what appears as an excess (of the Real) in the Symbolic order and is the object cause of desire. Whereas Freud's affect, as seen in Chapter One, is treated as something meaningful in itself: an index of pleasure/pain and a type of judgment, Lacan's *petit object a* in contrast is, as Zizek puts it, "objectively nothing." In *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture* Zizek states that, "The object a is 'objectively nothing', though, viewed from a certain perspective, it assumes the shape of something" (Zizek, 1991: 12). I will come back to this discussion further down.

[9] *Primary narcissism* relates to a state prior to the formation of an ego or sense of oneself as an individual. Laplanche and Pontalis describe it as "an early state in which the child [or ego] cathects its own self with the whole libido" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1988: 337). It is worth noting that primary narcissism is viewed as a problematic theory and which Freud abandoned in his later work. According to Ruth Leys, the status of the ego in such a formulation is problematic because "On the one hand, as a state in which the ego takes itself as its love object, primary narcissism corresponds to the first emergence of a unified subject or ego. On the other hand, Freud also conceptualises primary narcissism as a primitive state of the

sensations cannot be addressed. However, Lyotard argues that this is equally true of the adult who has formulated an ego, for affect seizes and takes control – and not the other way around. Unlike Freud, he views the state of primary narcissism as something that perseveres throughout adulthood. In fact, in *The Inhuman*, as I will go on to show, primary narcissism is a lasting condition which forms part of a larger process. Thus, for Lyotard, an adult who is immersed in language cannot address affect any more than a child could, since, he claims:

> A phrase can be more or less articulated, its polarisations more or less defined. Yet the affect-phrase will not allow such gradations. *Unarticulated* would signify: this phrase does not present a phrase-universe; it signals sense; this sense is of the singular kind, pleasure and/or pain ('it's alright, it's not alright'); this sense is not related to any referent: the 'it's alright' and the 'it's not alright' are no more attributes of an object than beauty or ugliness; finally this sense does not exude from any addressor (I) and does not address itself to any addressee (you). The signal that is the affect-phrase is tautegorical [tautégorique]: aesthesis (Lyotard, 2000: 47)[10].

Lyotard's claim that affect does not require a Subject or an 'I' is in keeping with the 'death of the subject', which highlights the linguistic subject which is born through and constructed by language and linguistic mechanisms.[11] As this subject is always mediated through discursive or linguistic processes, it cannot be viewed as an

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infant that occurs prior to the formation of an ego, a state epitomized by life in the womb. On the latter account primary narcissism is a strictly 'objectless' or undifferentiated state implying no split between the subject and the external world" (Leys, 2000: 137). In Lyotard's understanding of primary narcissism the two ideas mentioned above are not conflicting but rather define a process. As we shall see, the affect-event is only ever realised *belatedly*, and thus any awareness of it implies that it coincides with our entrance into language and as a result with the emergence of the ego or the subject.

[10] Lyotard borrows the term "tautegorical [tautégorique]" from German philosopher Friedrich Schelling, who argues that the origin of symbols cannot be understood with reference to other symbols alone. The self-establishing character of symbols leads him to posit that they are instead "tautegorical," suggesting that there is an intimate connection between the mythic symbols and the experiences that give rise to them. They arise, however, beyond conscious control, and in some sense they are identical with the experiences that gave rise to them. What Schelling stresses through this term is that not all words simply interpret other words, since "some break loose from linguistic convention, and effectively call attention, at least, to what remains essentially inarticulate experiences of a natural order, or what Schelling calls calls 'primordial thoughts' (Urgedanken)" (Day, 2003: 73). For further information see: Jerry Day's *Voegelin, Schelling and the Philosophy of Historical Existence* (2003).

[11] We can see here is that Lyotard makes a distinction between an actual phrase and an affect-phrase. He argues that whereas an actual phrase can be more or less articulated, the affect-phrase does not "allow such gradations," since it is entirely unarticulated, and if it signals something it merely signals a singular sense (unlike a phrase). Yet he uses the word 'phrase' as a way of opposing and explaining the difference between affect and signification.

'individual' or self-fulfilling and independent 'I'. Furthermore, the 'death of the subject' held that the transmission of meaning through language and the possibility of transparent linguistic intention are in fact illusory.[12] However, in relation to affect, the question that emerges is: In the absence of a subject, who then feels? Lyotard resolves this problem in an interesting way. Though he agrees with the 'death of the subject', he argues that instead of language being responsible for this death it is affect that in fact causes it to happen. Affect summons an experience which has no requirements for an 'I', the suggestion here being that there are feelings that the 'I' does not feel and experience. Affect here is not a lived experience, as it entails a kind of death of the mind (or of consciousness), which claims to be the sole subject of experience. Affect in Lyotard operates as a dimension of experience that is hidden from both 'ordinary' consciousness and the cause of its disruption. In Lyotard's reading of Freud, infantile (and as a result adult) affect has no addressor; however, there is no addressee either, while the 'I' does not communicate to 'you' the affect that seizes me. Lyotard's claim is derived from Freud's objection to Rank's thesis on birth trauma.[13] Freud had claimed that it is impossible for birth to be the first trauma, since an infant does not suffer from

[12] The 'death of the subject' can be traced back to several different writers (all roughly writing around the same time): Louis Althusser in "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1969); Jacques Lacan's *Écrits* (1966), Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), Roland Barthes' "The Death of the Author" (1967), Jacques Derrida's "Signature, Event Context" (1977) and "Structure, Sign and Play" (1966). All of these writers have contributed from various positions to what has become known as 'the death of the subject', by questioning the humanist assumption that subjectivity, that is, the individual or conscious mind, is the source, or origin of meaning. Though there is no singular or unified theory that explains the 'death of the subject', as a term it coincides with the notion of the 'death of the author' and questions the centrality of the human being, and his/her ability to be the source, or origin (an author-ity), over language and meaning intention, as well as further questioning the capability of acting according to intention (agency).

[13] Freud, in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926), objects to Rank's thesis on birth trauma and claims that "the infant has received certain sensory impressions, in particular of a visual kind, at the time of birth, the renewal of which can recall to its memory the trauma of birth and thus evoke a reaction of anxiety. This assumption is quite unfounded […] It is not credible that a child should retain any but tactile and general sensations relating to the process of birth" (Weber, 1982: 90).

the loss of an object, as the mother's womb is not an object in the first place.[14] Hence, for Lyotard, in the same way that an ego is deprived of an 'I' as a subject, it is also deprived of a 'you' as an object. In fact, he argues that affect demands neither an 'I' nor a 'you', since "ultimately, this meaning does not proceed from any addressor (I) and does not address itself to any addressee (you)" (Lyotard, 2006: 105)

In a similar manner, infantile affect has no referent. Lyotard claims that affect "speaks about nothing," as pain and pleasure do not refer to any object, and he argues in *La Phrase-affect*that "This appears to be simple since they are silences. Those who never utter a word agree, tacitly. Let's leave the feeling to its mutism, that is all" (Lyotard, 2000: 48). Adopting Freud's "polymorphous perversity," Lyotard asserts an object can be made to serve as an occasion for infantile affect, where every object can be employed to serve as an occasion for affects of pleasure or displeasure.[15] Lyotard describes this occasion by which infantile affectability arises as an occasion in an object, as "constant" but also "vague" and "errant." What this means is that affect does not adhere to a referential order, for its relation to the object is occasional and vague and thus cannot be about some thing or some object. Moreover, affect ignores referentiality in yet another way. A referent is not and does not indicate reality; instead, it is that which is recognised as reality through discursive processes. According to Lyotard, referentiality presupposes discourse, or an economy of exchange, and as affect ignores

[14] As we shall see in the next section, the figure-matrix (matrix deriving from the Latin word for 'mother' and originally meaning 'womb') that relates to the processes of affect and desire is neither an object nor an origin.

[15] Freud's "polymorphous perversity" is related to his theory of infantile sexuality. Freud defines "polymorphous perversity" of all human sexuality as absent of any pre-given natural order. Alongside his view of perversion this may initially appear problematic, since perversion in Freud is taken to mean a deviation from the norm of heterosexual genital intercourse. However, according to Margaret Muckenhoupt, "The infantile sexual stage was not meant to be identical to adult sexuality. According to Freud, children find sexual pleasure in many activities, such as thumb sucking, patting and touching themselves, retaining and passing faeces and masturbating. Since children could gain sexual pleasure in so many different ways, Freud claimed they were polymorphously perverse, meaning that there is the potential for all possible perversions in each child" (Muckenhoupt, 1997: 93-4).

the dimensions of discourse, it follows that affect also ignores the dimensions of referentiality. Infantile affectivity shows us that a child cannot address an affect as being about something, as they have no conception of objects as having referential properties or as being referents of a phrase caught in an economy of exchange between interlocutors. According to Claire Nouvet, "the infant cannot refer these feelings to anything that s/he can conceive as a 'body'. The very notion of 'body' or 'organism' can only be elaborated as the referent of a cognitive phrase that is here missing" (Nouvet, 2003: 235). Lyotard maintains:

> There is no *body* but as the referent of one or many cognitive phrases, certified by the procedures of establishing reality. There are many kinds of bodies, according to the nature of the knowledge that is being sought. The body as existence therefore implies the *logos.* Only a logical animal *has* a body. The *phôné* does not have a body since it is not referential. (Lyotard, 2000: 54).

According to Lyotard, then, the bodies constituted by Logos are "logical," for instance the body of the sociologist, the psychoanalyst, the doctor, the sergeant recruiter, etc. In contrast, affect is not a body but an inarticulate "incorporeal chaos" which cannot be talked about. This description of infantile affectivity with regards to referentiality is reproduced in adults through the idea of *suspension*. Lyotard posits that as affect occupies the place of now, at the very moment of pleasure or pain as it occurs, it cannot be related to any 'cause', and to do so would be to provide it with a cognitive stance and a meaning which is foreign to it. If it is impossible to associate affect with referentiality it is because affect (and its intensities) is not related to anything outside its absolute now. Consequently, is Lyotard claiming that affect has no meaning? According to him, affect does make 'sense', insofar as this sense is always the same: it is always pleasure and/or pain. Sensing here is viewed as minimal and is not the same sense (meaning) constituted by signification. Meanwhile, affect signals the pleasure or pain felt, but it does not 'say' what this sense of pleasure or pain means, or even to what it 'refers'.

Lyotard suggests that this 'sense' is unique and tied up in its own singularity, in that it always signals itself, "it signals meaning; this meaning is only of one kind, pleasure and/or pain (it's alright, it's not alright)" (Lyotard, 1998: 105). Affect is conceived, following Freud, as a type of sensing (a kind of judgment) that is tied to its own minimal signal (it refers only to itself). This sense, created by affect, is opposed to the meaning created in language. However, as we shall see, the two are not mutually exclusive, since affect (as index) is what incites signification and is responsible for the creation of linguistic meaning in the first place. But before I get to this discussion it is significant to consider affect's (temporal) manifestation within language.

According to Lyotard, affect functions autonomously in relation to language, since it belongs to an order outside language. The 'sense' of affect should not be confused with signification, in the same way that the signal of affect should not be confused with the sign either – it is both a state and a signal (or event) of that state. However, the signal of the state does not follow the state; rather, it coincides with it immediately. Anne Tomiche notes that "The status of the affect is thus that of a 'pure' presence (*Darstellung*), that is, without representation (*Vorstellung*)" (Tomiche, 1994: 46). In a chapter called "Voix" in *Lectures D'Enfance,* Lyotard claims "The *phôné* is the affect in as much as it is the signal of itself. The affect is its immediate manifestation" (Lyotard, 1991: 134). What this means in terms of time is that affect signals itself in immediacy, and in psychoanalytic terms it belongs to the (psychic) order that Lacan named the Real.[16] Lyotard claims in *La Phrase-affect*"The temporality of feeling is *now*" (Lyotard, 2000: 49). Lacan's petit object a, is the excess and object

[16] Lyotard's notion of affect is described in similar terms as Lacan's petit object a (as a trace of the Real in the Symbolic). However, as mentioned previously his notion of affect is primarily derived from Freud and differs markedly from Lacan in several ways. My reading of Lyotard's affect therefore differs from Bracha Ettinger's Lacanian reading of *Discourse, Figure* in *The Matrixial Borderspace* (2006). She claims: "In Lacan and Lyotard, the object a and the matrix-figure [figure-form] are […] ex-sisters of relative lack belonging to the same sphere, obliterated from consciousness" (Ettinger, 2006: 74.5)

cause of desire in the Symbolic (a phallic symbol). In Lyotard, however, affect is reconfigured as feminine (he uses the pronoun *elle* to refer to affect). As mentioned previously, there is a distinction to be made between the two terms, in that whereas the petit object a is, as Zizek puts it, "objectively nothing" that takes the shape or form of something, affect in Lyotard (as in Freud) is "something" and "not nothing." (Zizek 1991: 1991). It is precisely this difference between the two terms that allows Lyotard in *Discourse, Figure* to reconfigure desire as positive and productive as opposed to defining it as a lack (see later). In other words, creation in Lyotard does not take place ex nihilo (as in Lacan) but from a meaningful encounter with affect.[17] What Lacan and Lyotard share, though, is the view that the corresponding terms are 'traces' of the real and the object cause of desire, in the order of language. That affect is reconceptualised as the ineliminable residue of the real, is significant because it is a recurring point common to all three writers that I am discussing, but more than that, affect – as the trace of the real – provides Lyotard (as well as Deleuze and Kristeva, as we shall see) with a way to address what Lacan had continuously argued was impossible to speak about. Lyotard turns to Aristotle to discuss affect and to differentiate between the affective phonè and the sign, something that he finds in his discussion of Logos and pathèmata, to which I shall now turn to discuss.

Affective signalling is distinguished from the sign, Lyotard explains, through the distinction between Aristotelian logos (language or signification which is articulated through signifying units) and phonè, which is the non-signifying voice that we share with animals and which can only signal "pathèmata," i.e. affects. He states:

[17] See Jacques Lacan *Seminar VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1992) pgs: 142-157. Lacan argues that "Now, if you consider the vase from this point of view I first proposed, as an object made to represent the existence of emptiness at the center of the real that is called the Thing, this emptiness as represented in the representation presents itself as *nihil*, as nothing. And that is why the potter, just like you to whom I am speaking, creates the vase with his hand around the emptiness, creates it, just like the mythical creator ex nihilo, starting with a hole" (Lacan, 1992: 150).

> […] think of the affect-phrase not outside time, but outside diachrony. Pathemata know nothing of the dia - […] The ancient grammarians, who reserved the 'articulated voice' (phoné énarthros) for humans, leaving animals a 'muddled (or confused) voice' (phôné sunkékhuménè). This idea has its origins in Aristotle's Politics: 'Among all animals, only man is capable of speech (logos). Without doubt, the voice (phôné) is itself the sign (sēmeion) of pain and pleasure; it also belongs to other animals' (Lyotard, 2000: 50)[18].

Since Aristotelian logos presupposes a dimension of interlocution, Lyotard renames it "lexis". He explains that "lexis", is "something like 'enunciation' [which] is carried from an addressor to an addressee and transmits to this addressee a signification relating to that to which it refers" (Lyotard, 1991: 132). On the contrary, phonè is a confused, continuous and inarticulate voice, and it does not let itself be articulated or cut up into phonemes, the building blocks for the signifying units in words. Rather, it is, as Nouvet notes, "akin to a 'timbre' or a 'tone' an 'innovation' or an 'inflection'" (Nouvet, 2003: 237). Affect in Lyotard, as well as the difference between the articulate/inarticulate, corresponds to Freud's understanding of unconscious affect and his opposition between *Affekt* (affect) and *Vorstellung* (representation). The affect-phrase and the unconscious affect belong simultaneously inside and outside consciousness. According to Anne Tomiche:

> Both manifest themselves to consciousness: the affect is *perceived*, and the inarticulate phrase *happens* (as symptom or feeling of fear, for example). But both are outside consciousness, since the unconscious affect remains unrecognised or misconstrued and the inarticulate phrase does not speak of anything and is not addressed to anyone (Tomiche, 1994: 46).

[18] Lyotard turns to Aristotle in order to distinguish between logos and phonè (voice). However, at the same time, he is somewhat critical of this distinction, since only logos can distinguish between logos and phonè (between a political cry and a cry of pain) in the first place. Rancière also makes this point: referring to Aristotle, he suggests that "The initial logos is tainted with a primary contradiction" (Rancière, 1999: 16), which is why Lyotard reframes this distinction as one between *lexis* and *phonè*. Logos is exchanged for lexis, since the latter means 'word' rather than 'speech'. Lexis has two different orders operating within it: the first is a diachronic function of defining and relates to the sign, and the second is phonè, which breaks down the synchronic and diachronic function of language and belongs to the order of images and stands within it as an outsider. It is important to note that lexis is created and carried (moved) by images that sometimes adhere to signs (and when they do we call them representations) and other times to phonè (that are affective bodily images). In this formulation, it is in fact the image that has two functions and not lexis. Lyotard in this way attempts to escape the 'primary Aristotelian' contradiction. I will be discussing this further when I address the issue of images in *Discourse, Figure*.

What appears to make this position possible is that neither the unconscious affect nor the affect-phrase belongs to the order of representation.[19] Freud opens up the possibility of a non-representational unconscious with *Vortellungrepräsetanz*. The affect-phrase in Lyotard highlights Freud's idea of this non-representational status of the unconscious, and this is precisely the difference between lexis and phonè. Lyotard argues, "What in Freud's work seems to me to cover the distinction between the *lexis* and the *phônè* is not the opposition of the conscious and the unconscious, but that of the *Vorstellungrepräsentanz* (which represents by representation) with affect" (Lyotard, 1991: 137). Lyotard's affect-phrase constitutes a return to Freud's 'unconscious affect', and a crucial consequence of his approach is precisely to stress the non-representational status of the unconscious. Anne Tomiche is therefore right to point out Lyotard's aversion to the Lacanian unconscious, which he famously argues is "structured like a language." I will be coming back to this issue in Lyotard's discussion of the image in the following section. Following on from Lyotard's discussion of what distinguishes logos from phone, I will now address what differentiates between phonè and a simple sound.

Lyotard wonders what distinguishes phonè from a mere sound. Phonè is what in *Discourse, Figure* he calls an expression (a figure-form) that is the trace of affect in language and which he again defines as a type of signal. He defines phonè as "A *sēmeion*, a signal. It is not an arbitrary sign standing in place of something, an *onoma.* It is sense itself, in as much as it signals itself. What sense? A *pathema,* according to

[19] This is not to say that the affect-phrase (or unconscious affect) is disassociated from the order of images. On the contrary, what I will show in the discussion on *Discourse, Figure* is that the realm of the image is inherently located on the side of affect. In fact, according to Lyotard in this book, every representation is an attempt to reproduce (and signify) an affective (unconscious) perception (an image-event) that has already passed. When signified in language, however, these affective bodily mages become deceptive.

Aristotle, of pleasure, of pain, according to their singular nuances. Their timbre, more precisely" (Lyotard, 1991: 134). According to Lyotard, then, affect is defined by a signal that does not point towards an articulated referent or sign. A signal does not say anything, and if it were to say something, it would be merely to say that it exists in its own singularity. The signal "chokes, it erupts, it grows pale, it moans, sighs, yawns, cries – it is delicate or fleshy" (Lyotard, 1991: 134) The signal is incoherent, inarticulate, it is noise or a "timbre" – a mark or a stamp that exists only to attest to, or prove as witness that something which we have not grasped has occurred. According to Lyotard, "affect is, in effect, a witness, since it manifests itself in the *phôné*. It is a witness beyond suspicion, being fully what it is, and signal that it is, it could not lie" (Lyotard, 1991: 137). Affect in Lyotard is an indisputable witness to itself, and it testifies and bears witness to its own pleasure and pain while manifesting its signal as it occurs. In its own order affect is a truthful witness; however, that is not to say that it is truthful outside this order. When affect is dragged into the order of logos, indeed it becomes a false witness. He contends:

> In order to understand the status of affect, one must admit that there is some difference (one that I believe to be 'ontological') between *Darstellung*, presentation, and *Vorstellung*, representation. Affect as 'effect' of excitation is present, but it is not present for anything but itself. This is what renders it both irrefutable and at the same time inadequate as a witness. It only 'says' one thing: that it is there, but not for what or of what it is witness. Neither of when, or where (Lyotard, 2000: 73-74).

For Lyotard, affect is sincere insofar as it remains in its own order; it merely 'says' that it is *there* through either gesture or inflection, but this is all that affect says – it 'says' nothing else. Thus, within the order of articulated logos, affect remains both beyond suspicion and yet always eminently suspect. In other words, within logos affect is judged as both irrefutable (there is no doubt that there is affect – it exists – it is *there*) and yet it is always equivocal, in the sense that its testimony disregards and leaves indeterminate the four poles (addressor, addressee, referent, meaning) that articulated

logos needs in order to speak. According to the structure and rules of logos, affect can neither speak nor be heard, and outside its own order it is open to falsification. In fact, any attempt to link affect to a determinable addressor, addressee, referent or meaning falsifies the truth thereof, although paradoxically, according to the rules of articulated language and signification, such falsification is required in order for affect to become a true witness. In other words, affect has a sense that is (somewhat) meaningful, even though this sense does not convey meaning in the same way as the signifying properties of language. They both, however, function, as I will discuss next, under different conditions and as two separate and autonomous realms in the order of representations. And since the notion of representation involves the concept of the image, what I will demonstrate in the next section, where I discuss *Discourse, Figure*, is that both affect and signification operate through the order of images, albeit in different ways.

Lyotard asks: What is the difference between the toned "affectual" voice and the communicative voice? He maintains that the inarticulate *phoné* of affect and articulated logos are "heterogeneous" to each other. That is not to say that affect is a language, for it remains irreducible to signification; however, at the same time, the claim that affect is irreducible to signification does not mean to say that it stands outside of articulated language either. Phoné in Lyotard is neither the absolute other of language nor absolutely outside articulated logos, and though phoné can inhabit articulated language, it can only do so as a squatter or clandestine guest, or, as Nouvet puts it, as "an 'outside within' the presence of which articulated language does not even suspect or hear" (Nouvet, 2003: 239). Lyotard argues that affect is in fact mute, although mute here does not necessarily mean that affect is voiceless – it is not the absence of a voice but rather the condition of a voice condemned to remain unheard. In order to support this claim, Lyotard turns to the etymology of the word 'mute' and repeatedly reminds us that the

word ‘mute’ comes from the root ‘mu’, from which ‘to murmur’, ‘to moan’ and ‘mystery’ are derived, as well as the Latin word ‘muttum’, from which the French word for ‘word’ – ‘mot’ – comes. Nouvet says that for Lyotard “there is a murmur and even a moaning, in all articulated words that we pronounce. It is the murmur and moaning of affect, which the articulated language of communication ‘mutes’ by being deaf to it, however loud and even deafeningly strident, it might be. Logos is simply not equipped to hear it” (Nouvet, 2003: 239). When passing through logos, the affectual phoné “can ‘damage’ logos by suspending or interrupting its linkages” (Nouvet, 2003: 239), and in *La Phrase-Affect*, Lyotard claims, “The affect-phrase offends the rules of types of discourse; it does them damage” (Lyotard, 2000: 47). He uses the example of personal pronouns with regards to the axis of destination, the ‘I’ and ‘you’, claiming that affect, being a “confused voice,” will blur the distinctions between personal pronouns and positions and therefore suspend (it does damage to) established linkages. Affect is the limit of what can be articulated, it is thus the limit of language itself. Any attempt to reconcile affect in language denotes an arrival at an impasse or an inescapable differend. In “Emma,” Lyotard concludes that “‘Presence’, the pure autonomy of affect, does not translate as presentation and representation. Disagreement between this affectivity and articulation is inevitable” (Lyotard, 2000: 94), while in *The Differend* he distinguishes between what he names “litigation” and “differend,” the former of which is described as that which resolves conflict within a commonly accepted language, while a differend is the conflict by which no common rule may be found, as both parties speak two different languages that are incommensurate. Hence, for Lyotard, they must be treated as separate, for to treat them as if they were the same would be to ‘wrong’ at least one of the parties involved.

Geoffrey Bennington in *Lyotard: Writing the Event* (1988) and Andrew Benjamin in *The Lyotard Reader* (1991), among others, argued that *The Differend* (1989) denotes a break from affect theory and a shift towards a 'linguistic turn' in Lyotard's work. On the contrary, I would argue that his notion of the differend incorporates the affective register within its definition by emphasising the notion of language as a heterogynous space that allows for the coexistence of two incommensurable languages. His definition of the differend describes the condition or state of being confronted by an inarticulate phrase, or affect. Lyotard writes:

> The differend is the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be. This state includes silence, which is a negative phrase, but it also calls upon phrases which are in principle possible. This state is signalled by what one ordinarily calls a feeling: 'One cannot find the words', etc. A lot of searching must be done to find new rules for forming and linking phrases that are able to express the differend disclosed by feeling, unless one wants to be smothered right away in a litigation and for the alarm sounded by the feeling to have been useless. What is at stake in literature, in a philosophy, in a politics perhaps, is to bear witness to differends by finding idioms for them (Lyotard, 1988: 13).

In contrast to Peter Banki, who claims that "No doubt, the concept of the differend itself is also on the side of the Law, inasmuch as it is constructed in terms of a legal discourse and a scene of litigation" (Banki, 2002: 273), my own understanding of the differend in Lyotard is that it is an affective term.[20] According to Lyotard something "demands" to be put into phrases that cannot be put into phrases right away, which is "when human beings who thought they can use language as an instrument for communication, learn through the feeling of pain which accompanies silence (and of pleasure which accompanies the invention of a new idiom) […]" (Lyotard, 1991: 13). The notion of the differend shows (in the same way as Freudian affect, seen in Chapter One) that there is an order to the way in which pain and pleasure are organised in affective experience.

[20] As the title of "La Phrase-affect: (D'une supplément au Différend)" suggests, "La-Phrase-Affect" is a supplement to the differend. In this short essay, *The Differend* is used as a constant point of reference, emphasising from the beginning the differend's affective dimension by opening with the same quotation that I refer to above.

The event of affect corresponds first and foremost to pain and to what Lyotard calls a dissensus or displacement, while pleasure involves the process of creating new idioms in language, new analogies and new metaphors that testify to and represent an affect. This, as we shall see in *Discourse, Figure*, is linked to Lyotard's notion of desire (as the force of affect), and so the relationship between affect and signification is therefore viewed as a creative enterprise that involves two heterogeneous orders that operate within systems of representation. But it is affect that is emphasised, in all three writers that I discuss in this thesis, as the creative element that ensures the becoming not only of language, but also of the subject itself. I will come back to this idea in more detail below. The affect demanding articulation is accompanied by the painful recognition that what remains to be articulated exceeds what can be phrased presently. The experience of a differend bears witness to the excess of affect that cannot be represented, thereby causing a sensation of pain, but it is also followed by a sense of pleasure as a result of the invention of new idioms, ones that do not yet exist, involves.[21] In fact, the notion of the figural, in *Discourse, Figure*, is itself a differend in the relationship between discourse (representation) and figure (bodily-image). The figural is the ineffable other of language, its differend – that instance in language where signification finds its limit, for it cannot incorporate the figural (as they speak two different languages) without subordinating it to its own terms. Simply put, the figural, like the differend, is what has not been put into words yet. If his later work emphasises the inarticulacy of affect it is because this work focuses on issues of language and *writing*. Lyotard's later work emphasises the mechanisms of affect within language, from the point of view of the

[21] The use of the word *idiom* is significant, as its definition refers back to expression. The OED defines it as "a characteristic mode of expression in music and art." Lyotard associates the term with affect, defining it as "every expression loaded with affect" (Lyotard, 2006: 258) that "forms an absolutely singular, untranslatable way of deciphering what is happening" (Lyotard, 1992: 92). The processes of creating an idiom will be viewed in more detail in the section on *Discourse, Figure*, where he provides an account.

affect(ed) writer, who is unable to capture affect in any immediate sense, since signification acts as a barrier. However, the writer is capable of invoking affect through writing and in particular by approaching it obliquely, through new and singular expressions that the creation of new idioms and new metaphors entails.

Lyotard asserts that "one owes affect," and while this debt can never be repaid, it must at least be recognised. He writes that all writing "is indebted to affect" and affect is "desperate to free itself" (Lyotard, 1991: 146). One owes affect the crippling pain of labour, at least to attempt to find the words that will testify to it and allow it to be known. Known, that is, through its own muteness – to testify to its muteness. In particular, this is the task of literature, which labours to say "a secret affection" which any writer knows it to be unsayable and irreducible to articulation. Words necessarily betray the muteness of affect, by attempting to articulate that which obstinately and absolutely resists articulation. Lyotard argues "But I must give it a name, this solitary thing" (Lyotard, 1991: 146). Nonetheless, within this failure there is a success, namely that of the opening up of new signifying organisations, of new possibilities. Nouvet claims "Instead of owing the affect the crippling pain that interrupts logos and threatens it with annihilation, what is now owed to the affect is the proliferation of new and as yet unheard of possible linkages that comes through the constraints of literary style. It is still a suffering of sorts" (Nouvet, 2003: 245). For Lyotard, one owes words to the unconscious affect, which is but another name for that which haunts and terrifies philosophical thinking. Lyotard claims "Unfortunately there is still an enormous amount of work to be done, it escapes my grasp, and yet, it has no truth because it is not complete" (Lyotard, 1991: 146). The literary work lacks truth and is incomplete because it is always haunted by the affect-phrase. He identifies with the labouring and suffering of the writer to find the right words and his/her despair to find that the language is

inadequate; something is missing, something is lacking. Lyotard contends that it is not language that lacks but rather language fails to write and record the inflexible phoné.

Though affect exists as an autonomous system that is incommensurable to the symbolic system of language, it interferes in its mechanisms by destabilising systems of representation from within. By occupying the space within language, which can neither be seen nor heard by language itself, affect becomes a creative force that 'mutely' disrupts language and restores the new. It is thus an originary force, and it is the task of literature and art more generally to testify to the muteness of affect. Anne Tomiche, in "Lyotard and/on Literature," points out that his literary canon

> […] from Butor to Stein, Joyce and Beckett – includes a genealogy of writers who are heir to a Flaubert asserting his desire to write a 'book on nothing' (livre sur rien) and to a Mallarmé stating that to write is to assert the absence of things rather than their presence. Such writers focus on 'nothingness', 'emptiness', and 'non-sense' rather than on plenitude of meaning (Tomiche, 2001: 150).

The writers Lyotard chooses to write about are more interested in the *how* of representation rather than *what* is represented. He is not interested in genre or the kind of literature that focuses on creating harmonious or beautiful forms; instead, his interest lies in specific texts (despite genre or categorisation) that distort and give a voice to disharmony and excess. The writers he deals with in literature are more interested in words themselves than in narratives, and in *Postmodern Fables* he goes further than that, arguing that literature is far better equipped than philosophy to give a voice to its constitutive nothingness or inherent void. He states "Gertrude Stein, Joyce, or Duchamp seem like better 'philosophical' minds than Nietzsche or Heidegger – by better, I mean more apt to take into consideration the exitless nothingness the West gave birth to in the first quarter of the twentieth century" (Lyotard, 1999: 23). Similarly, in the field of visual arts, Lyotard shows a clear preference for non-representational painting, as in the

instance of Karel Appel, who gives greater importance to colour and gesture.[22] He thus draws a parallel between colours in painting and words in literature. He argues in *The Inhuman* that "Perhaps in words themselves, in the most secret place of thought, are its matter, its timber, its nuance, i.e., what it cannot manage to think […] as Gertrude Stein thought, to write is to respect [words'] candor and their age, as Cézanne or Karel Appel respect colours" (Lyotard, 1991: 143). Furthermore, he focuses on words in literature and colour in painting as what escape conscious thought and language. In *Discourse, Figure* literature operates in his work to *illustrate* his own philosophical concepts. We might say, then, that literature performs the same function as painting, in that it has the ability to illustrate something (provoke images) through the use of colourful analogies and creative metaphors, while it does not have to abide by the strict rules of language that articulated explanation or communication in philosophy necessitate or even strive for. *Discourse, Figure*'s analysis of the visual dimension in Butor's texts and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* illustrates the operations of the figural within discourse.[23] For Lyotard metaphors are images of language, since they designate their object through analogy and by evading naming. He maintains that "The metaphor is a non-signified comparison" (Lyotard, 2011: 284), and literature, he stresses, is capable of creating images and operating (at least in part) through the visual dimension. What will be shown in the following section, where I discuss Lyotard's notion of perception in *Discourse, Figure*, is that images are primarily affective – it is the image and the order of the visual that "carries" or "bears," as the etymology of metaphor suggests, the

[22] See Lyotard's *Karel Appel: A Gesture of Colour* (2009) and *Lesson of Darkness* (1993). In *Des dispositfs pulsionnels* (1973), Lyotard in the two essays 'Freud celon Cézanne' and 'Painting as a Libidinal Set-Up' engages with the painting of Cézanne and seeks to explain how movement is associated with desire in such a way as to undermine structure. He claims that in Cézanne's paintings colour is emancipated from encircling lines and representational figures, since "the colours work together, free of the mediation of containers" and "help us understand how sensation is not dependent on representation and spatial limits" (Lyotard, 2006: 287).

[23] See Anne Tomiche "Lyotard and/on Literature" (2001).

unrepresentable affect. Metaphors are affective images in a similar way to colour in painting. However, is there no difference between painting and writing literature?

For Lyotard the relation between the written text and the image is a relation of mutual exclusion between two heterogeneous spaces that function through the affective register. He notes in the exergue of *Lectures D'enfance*:

> Nobody knows how to write. Each one of us, the 'greatest' most of all, writes to capture via and in the text something we don't know how to write. Which is not going to let itself be written, we know. The narratives and essays that the present readings relate were travelled along the trail of this poverty, this destitution. Like a frontier at once inside and outside, the line of disappointment marks out an object for reflection, out there, and works over the text up close, at the level of its writing (Lydon, 2001: 25).

It is the writer's body which is questioned here; to write is to become child-like, to return to a state of the body prior to entering language. I will be discussing this notion of infantile inhumanity in further detail below. Language finds itself lacking when faced with the task of presenting what does not lend itself to be written, and words must describe what the eye has already seen, which is why paying dues to affect through writing must always be a belated response to what has always already been missed (by consciousness). By contrast, in *Discourse, Figure* the images of art (painting more specifically) are capable of capturing affect as difference in a more immediate way. If in language the affective trace operates as an index that resists articulation, in *Discourse, Figure* Lyotard shows that the affective trace in the visual or the image operates differently. Here, affect and image are *correlates* and not *incommensurable* like language and affect. In the realm of the visual, affect is affirmed through the whole body gesture, as an unconscious force that is linked intimately to his conceptualisation of desire. Where language aims to communicate, art aims to transmit the incommunicable and to present the un-presentable. Visual art therefore reveals the processes of the visual order that would otherwise remain unseen. In the following section I will turn to *Discourse, Figure* in order to discuss in more detail images and art

in relation to affect. Here, we find that painting is capable of capturing affect more directly (or more immediately) as *difference*.

II Affect and Image

In *Discourse, Figure* the figural addresses the notion of affect as a process, by paying particular attention to the notion of the image.[24] The figural establishes an order of images that forms a critical function of 'seeing' before it becomes thought or perception – and therefore prior to its introduction into language. As we shall see, this can be thought of as a type of thought before thinking that involves an affective intelligent and a sentient body that in its interaction with the world makes (affective) judgments, and in particular negative ones (dissensus), prior to consciousness. This forms an affective process that involves bringing unconscious affects, which are sensed as meaningful although experienced outside language, into conscious thought and perception that thereby results in inciting the subject to speak. This process therefore involves displacing the subject by disturbing her ideologically and linguistically formed perceptions of reality, and it thereby transforms the subject's thinking processes as well as language itself. This is what Lyotard, but also Deleuze and Kristeva, call "thinking differently" (see later). It is significant to stress at this point that although the notion of the figural develops in exchanges with a number of different writers, artists and theorists who discuss the sensory and affect, in my reading of *Discourse, Figure* I take the figural as having developed predominantly from a reading of Freud's concept of *affect as process*, more than any other. In what follows, I discuss the figural as a process that involves a correlation between affect (as difference) and the image or visual order.

[24] The word "figural" derives from the Latin word "figura." Eric Auerbach in an essay called 'Figura' traces this term, which in pagan antiquity meant "plastic form" or "image" to its later meaning and appropriation in the Christian world to mean a "prophesy" or "pre-figuration." See Auerbach 'Figura' in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (1984).

This entails a discussion that proceeds by attempting to sever the link between images and signification to which structuralist accounts, in extending the Cartesian notion of the image of discursive images, have given rise.

Maintaining the difference of the visual is central to Lyotard's understanding of affect, and as we shall see in the following chapters it is just as important to Deleuze and Kristeva. In all three writers we find that the visual or image is distinguished from and privileged over signification as that which preserves affective difference. In *Discourse, Figure* Lyotard exhibits a sensitivity to the particularities of the visual (the image) and calls for a "defence of the eye." He also undertakes to disentangle the visual from signification, in order to preserve this difference. To hear and to read is not the same as to see, he posits, and in passing from the text to the image, the status of the eye changes: "One does not read or hear a painting. Seated at a table, one identifies or recognises linguistic unities; standing in representation, one seeks out plastic and libidinal events" (Lyotard, 2011: 10). In *Discourse, Figure* the affective register, or what Lyotard names *the figural*, is a matrix of his broader philosophy whereby sensual experience is viewed as a process (a becoming) and treats affect as an issue of perception (through psychoanalysis and phenomenology) and as an aesthetic term that treats the images of art.

Lyotard, in *Discourse, Figure*, argues that the difference in the visual should neither be ignored nor be reduced to the sign system of signification; the image's difference belongs to the figural, which in turn describes the relationship between affect (as violence) and desire (as force) and the process that they form together within the order of images.[25] The figural is neither structural nor stable; it does not define a

[25] Force and violence should not be taken to mean the same thing. In Lyotard's account of the figural, affect is connected to violence and is what does violence to the Law (signification). Force, on the other hand, is related to his notion of a productive and positive desire that organises the processes of the figural but also allows for signification to emerge.

concept but rather explains an affective process that is always a fluid form in flux. He illustrates this process by arguing that it cannot be captured (in writing) and can only be referred to through analogy via artwork. Bill Readings is right to point out that the figural is not simply opposed to the discursive "as another kind of discourse" (Readings, 1991: 3); rather, he argues that the figural "opens discourse to a radical heterogeneity, a singularity, a difference which cannot be rationalised or subsumed within the rule of representation" (Readings, 1991: 3). The figural problematises the notion of representation, by indicating that an integral part of its process is something that language cannot grasp or represent (consciously). In other words, the notion of representation here is as much defined by what it does represent as by what it cannot represent. If language fails to grasp the figural's difference, it is because language seeks to unify and thus cannot capture the affect in its singular form, which is why Lyotard privileges the work of art and in particular abstract art. Painting, unlike language, has the ability to capture affect-events directly through the image, by bypassing the sign-system of language altogether. How, then, does Lyotard understand the relationship between the visual and language? And how does he link the figural to the image or the visual?

Throughout *Discourse, Figure* Lyotard emphasises the radical difference between language and the visual, positing that this work will take the side of the "eye." He clearly privileges the image or the visual as being located on the side of affect. He argues:

> This book takes the side of the eye, of its sitting, shadow is its prey. The half-light that, after Plato, the word threw like a gray pall over the sensory, that it consistently thematized as a lesser being, whose side has been very rarely really taken, taken in truth, since it was understood that its side is that of falsity, scepticism, the rhetorician, the painter, the *condottiere*, the libertine, the materialist – this half-light is precisely what interests this book (Lyotard, 2011: 5).

According to Lyotard, therefore, a common misconception in the history of Western philosophy has been to associate the visual with falsity and linking it closely to terms such as imitation, representation and reproduction. Jacques Rancière, in *The Future of the Image* (2007), echoes the same concern despite his differences with Lyotard.[26] He writes:

> In our day not to resemble is taken for the imperative of art, while photographs, videos and displays of objects similar to everyday ones have taken the place of abstract canvases in galleries and museums. […] For there is a growing disquiet: does not resemblance involve renouncing the visible? Or does it involve subjecting its concrete richness to operations and artifices whose matrix resides in language? (Rancière, 2007: 7-8).

On a similar note, Lyotard notes that the visual's depth, its richness, which is also its difference, has been denied and taken to reside almost exclusively in language. He illustrates that the figurative (representation) depends on the negative relation between signifiers that includes an exterior correlate only by reducing its density and opacity into its own closed space. Language becomes a barrier that does not allow one to see, feel or grasp the object that it designates. In order to signify, the totalising system of language reduces its object to a negative relation between words, pulverising depth into a flat surface of oppositions. He argues instead that it is the phenomenological open space of the figural, or "of the eye," that gives objects to us in their density, and the figural designates the visual density of signs and renders visible the fluctuations of desire. According to Rancière, this understanding of the image in Lyotard (and others like him) illustrates that "The images of art are operations that produce a discrepancy, a dissemblance. Words describe what the eye might see or express [and] what it will

[26] In the *Future of the Image,* Rancière criticises Lyotard for "radicalising Adorno's dialectic of reason and its disruption as it came up against the 'impossibility of art after Auschwitz' (rather than a proscription against its representation), transforming it into a sublime art of the unrepresentable" (Kafala, 2007: 8). In contrast to Lyotard, who argues that the event of affect cannot be represented in language, Rancière goes to great lengths in order to demonstrate that nothing is as un-representable as the property of an event, but rather that documenting and historicising an event is always a matter of choice.

never see or express […] This means two things. In the first place, the images of art are, as such, dissemblances. Secondly, the image is not exclusive to the visible" (Rancière, 2007: 7). Indeed, Lyotard illustrates not only that images of art and of perception produce discrepancy or dissemblance to words or the text, but also that the image is not exclusive to the visible. In other words, the paradox of the visual is that there are images that we do not see – images that are not visual. By highlighting the *distinction* between text and image, Lyotard is also able to show the *connection* between the visual and affect.

In *Discourse, Figure* the figural is defined by its relationship to the visual and Lyotard describes it through analogy and metaphor as what reveals the tension between line and letter. The figural, akin to the unconscious affect of his later work, operates through or beneath established forms of codified discourse, or the figurative (representation). He also differentiates between textual space and figural space (note that in the case of figural 'space' it does not refer to a tangible or material space) as two different forms that occupy discourse in two very different ways. He argues that "The letter is an unvarying closed line; the line is the open moment of a letter that perhaps closes again elsewhere, on the other side. Open the letter, you have the image, the scene, and magic. Close the image, you have the emblem, the symbol, and the letter" (Lyotard, 2011: 264). This distinction refers to an essential rupture between *text* (as letter) and *image* (as graphic line) whereby the text/letter belongs to figurative space and the image/line belongs to the space of the sensory or the figural, which itself reveals that the space of the text and the image are incommensurable. For Lyotard (and as we shall see for Deleuze, too) the figural is an inherently open space that closes at times when language (representation) creates a form of stasis. What Lyotard and Deleuze have in common, is a definition of the figural that brings into question the difference between

the (graphic) line and letter (text), or otherwise the image and signification. The open space of the former is at odds with the closed structural space of the latter, thereby making the two spaces incommensurate. But more than that, both writers show that it is the image that operates in both linguistic and affective space and therefore performs a double function. Gesture and movement, here, are at one with seeing, while linguistic signs mediate this space when it enters consciousness, thereby shifting the emphasis from a critical function of seeing to an interpretive function of reading. In Lyotard's definition, more specifically, the figural is constituted in depth. Moreover, the letter belongs to the figurative (representation), while the figural is the unrepresentable affective register that operates within or beneath the letter. According to Lyotard, when closed, the image is related to signification (or to text), where it "fulfils its antique function of deception [pseudein]. But there must be an element of pseudein in writing. The text deceives not by the ear, but by the eye" (Lyotard, 2011: 264), i.e. the closed image that he is referring to is the enclosed space of linguistic representation where the primary function of the image is to deceive. Yet, there is another side to the image for Lyotard – the one, which he calls "the open moment of a letter" that operates through figural (non-) space. Although the image is inherently and immanently figural it operates in both figural and figurative space, although it does so in different ways and with different effects. In the closed space of the figurative it is inhabited by language (or the Symbolic) and functions to co-create the letter, whereas in the open space of the figural it functions by capturing and circulating affects prior to their entrance into the Symbolic and has the effect of dismantling rigid or stagnant linguistic ideologies and thus is capable of bringing about change. What interests Lyotard in this book are the "open" moments of the visual that emphasise the non-visual function of the image. These affective and sensory images are the focus of *Discourse, Figure*, and it is

precisely these unseen (unconscious) and affective images that create displacement and form the process that he calls "the figural." The figural, then, is not synonymous with the visual but designates the gesture, or more accurately the event, that breaks through discourse and reveals purely visual forms (figures) operating within it.

The figural is the space of the figure (body), and Lyotard identifies three distinct modalities or dimensions of the figural that operate through images, namely the figure-image, the figure-form and the figure-matrix (what he names above: image, scene and magic). The 'figure' is Lyotard's fourth main term, which I understand here as a body (or bodily image) that mutually implicates the body with cognition, showing that they are not mutually exclusive to one another. This is the same definition of the figure that we shall see in Deleuze in the following chapter. A central feature of Lyotard's phenomenology is therefore to think about gesture (movement) and visuality together in relation to the capacities of the human body. Visuality, in Lyotard's conceptual schema, is unavoidably associated with both perception and matter. As Rodowick points out, it follows the dictum of all phenomenology, in that "'man' is the measure of all things" and presumes "the presence of the body as both a perceptual origin and a mutual agency that exerts force or action on matter." (Rodowick, 2001: 35). Lyotard defines the figure as "a spatial manifestation that linguistic space cannot incorporate without being shaken, an exteriority it cannot interiorise as signification" (Lyotard, 2011:7). The visual operates through the figure and produces its sense through gesture, and he names this a *deictic* relation between the subject and the object that extends outside the living body. Unlike signification, images assume this distance and reveal depth. According to Lyotard, however, the figures taken as an aesthetic term in art (figure-image) and as a literary term in discourse (figure-form) are separated *only* when signification is erected as a barrier. This does not mean to say that these are different figures but rather that the

figure operates differently according to the environment in which it exists. I will now take a closer look at Lyotard's conceptualisation of these figures, although I will not be viewing the figure-form in detail herein, since it describes the affect-event in language that I have already spoken about in the section above on affect and language.

The *figure-image* denotes an affective displacement that takes place in lived experience inasmuch as the medium of visual art. In its lived dimension the transformation of both material and virtual space takes place through gestures of the human body and its aptitude for movement. For Lyotard visual art is capable of capturing the processes and mechanisms of displacement that are otherwise lost in the immediacy of lived experience. He states that "The figure-image, that which I see in the hallucination or the dream, and which the painting and film offer me, is an object placed at a distance, a theme. It belongs to the order of the visible, as outline" (Lyotard, 2011: 268). The figure-image, whether real or hallucinated, belongs to the visual as that which does violence to the rules regulating the formation of a perceived object. In other words, it deconstructs the 'percept' (the mental impressions perceived by the senses) and takes effect in the space of difference. Lyotard defines it as that which organises plastic space, and if the figure-image is what *deconstructs* the silhouette's outline (the "transgression of the contour"), it is because what it "renders visible" is not a *thing* but a *process* of deconstruction and displacement.[27] The process in question is what Lyotard names "rendering visible." Guy Callan and James Williams elucidate what this entails:

> To render visible is not to allow a perception through sight, nor is it to define a sensation of seeing. It is rather to *disrupt* perception by removing its claim to objects or

[27] This idea comes about through a discussion of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). Hegel, according to Lyotard, performs the operation of illustrating that the exteriority of the sensory is in fact interior. Lyotard claims that painting and discourse share the ability to represent themselves in the process of being made. However, the figure-form (in discourse) is different to the figure-image (in painting), since the latter "also has the power to represent visibility itself" and "in front of discourse there is the figure-image, while in discourse dwells the figure-form" (Lyotard, 2011: 49). He claims that "What they have in common is the figure, which I call figural space. The latter surrounds discourse, offering it its object as image; and discourse also harbours this space within itself, which determines its form" (Lyotard, 2011: 50).

> to things – the perception of a phoneme or a group of letters. It is also to disrupt sensation as the sensing of feeling by detaching it from well-defined feelings related to their significations – the feeling of sadness. Instead, seeing becomes at one with a material event (Callan and Williams, 2011: 43) (my emphasis).

What the figure-image reveals is a sensation of *resistance* to objectification, connected to the 'breaking through' of an event that at the same time surpasses perception, sensation and signification. The figural penetrates through language when a system of presentation has interiorised a form of negativity (a bodily distance in space) that is different to the one which determines language. The negativity between the body and the object in its field of vision is not the same one that applies to language, since it produces sense in a very different way, namely by engaging the desiring body in its relation to signs that are plastic, visual and dense. It is in this sense that seeing becomes at one with the material event. He claims that the figural "ties the visible neither to the I-You of language, nor to the One of perception, but to the Id of desire; not to the immediate figures of desire, but to its operations" (Lyotard, 2011: 19). The figure-image deconstructs the percept and displaces the subject; however, it is also capable of revealing the operations of desire, in contrast to the figure-form, where language stands as a barrier. This brings us to the notion of the figure-form.

The *figure-form* is what Lyotard names the "non-linguistic space" within language that gives it its expressive function (or what deconstructs the readability of discourse).[28] He suggests that the figure-form is present in the visible, and it may even be visible, but in general it remains unseen. Although the figure-form and the figure-image tend to be two discrete modalities of the figural, voice and image are not distinct but complementary and intimately related, since they engage equally in the process of

[28] I will not be dealing with the figure-form at length here, since it corresponds to expression and phonè or voice that I have already dealt with in my discussion on language. He states "the figure-form is the presence of nonlanguage in language. It is something that belongs to another order lodged in discourse, granting the latter its expressivity" (Lyotard, 2011: 49).

deconstructing signification. As already mentioned, this distinction responds to two different functions of the visual, and it only differentiates between the them when language becomes a barrier. If the figure-image is what renders the processes of the figural visible, Lyotard argues that "this making visible is equally possible in the order of language itself, only not as signification but as expression. In front of discourse there is the figure-image, while in discourse dwells the figure-form. […] But one can only gain access to this structure through unstructured desire" (Lyotard, 2011: 49). Linguistic structures arise from and are transformed by figural (phenomenological) processes that involve the body, its gestures and its movement in space and at a given point in time. The displacement involved in the figure-image entails the displacement of thought (via a differend), whereby the (unconscious) body and the (conscious) mind are at conflict. The figure-form is what comes as a result of a figure-image. The figure-form is therefore, a type of (unconscious) re-thinking through the act (gesture) of writing. The figure-image is recovered in writing then, but is transformed (into signs) although it also leaves a trace. The figural therefore is a process that begins with displacement (figure-image) and ends with the creation of discourse and a condensation of the affect, in a different form (figure-form). Affect as process is concerned with the relationship between gesture and image and the processes that these entail. The figural however, is organised and regulated not by a subject but rather, by unconscious desire. I will now turn to the figure-matrix, which is related to Lyotard's notion of desire.

For Lyotard, the act of seeing is vitally different to any other experience, precisely because it is linked to *present* experience. He asserts that "the eye no longer listens, it desires," and "what is inscribed is a kind of non-writing; the space in which it moves is that of an object, not a text. An object's space is to be seen, not read. And this seeing is desiring" (Lyotard, 2011: 264). He distinguishes between the object and its

text whereby the eye (as material thing) is caught *between* a mode of perception that is restrictive, a formulaic means of representation *and* an affective or figural mode that transgresses the former function. The function of the eye transforms from a "deciphering organ" in textual production, to a "desiring organ" in figural presentations, i.e. painting, and whereas writing reduces the opacity of the image to a grid of oppositions that undermine the density of the figure, visual art reveals its inner workings. The category of transgression is linked to the *figure-matrix*, and it is what defines the figural as a process. In contrast to the other two figures, the figure-matrix is the radical exteriority that transgresses both image and text, which is precisely why D.N. Rodowick argues that "at a deeper level, Lyotard's figural is more than a chiasmus between text and figure – it is a force that transgresses the intervals that constitute discourse and the perspectives that frame and position the image" (Rodowick, 2001: 2). The figural as a figure-matrix acts as the *force* of the figural that is capable of violating and intruding both the visual and signification. It is thus separate from both and defines a semiotic regime where the ontological distinction between linguistic (discourse) and plastic representation (painting) breaks down.

The figure-matrix is the most radical modality of the figural and is irredeemably invisible. Lyotard argues that "There exists another, figural space. One must assume it buried, for it shuns sight and thought; it indicates itself laterally, fleetingly, within discourses and perceptions, as what disturbs them. It is desire's own space, what is at stake in the struggle that painters and poets tirelessly wage against the return of the Ego and text" (Lyotard, 2011: 129). The figural, in the guise of the figure-matrix, does not occupy or belong to any space, though it does operate in the space of desire. He carefully disassociates desire from language and relieves it from its psychoanalytic definition of lack, and he contends that desire does not speak; rather, it does violence to

the order of utterance and this violence is primordial "desire consists in this transgression" Lyotard, 2011: 233). Desire, he claims, "is a matter of 'seeing' which has taken refuge among words, cast out on their boundaries, irreducible to 'saying'" (Lyotard, 2011: 233). The figure-matrix is comparable to what Deleuze and Guattari understand as chaos and the "body without organs," which I will be looking at in the next chapter. Lyotard, like Deleuze, re-conceptualises desire as positive and productive or, as John Mowitt puts it in the introduction of *Discourse, Figure*, "more like a factory, a site of production, [rather] than a theatre, a site of reproduction and representation" (Mowitt, 2011: xxii).

The relationship between perception and desire marks Lyotard's relation to, but also his distance from, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, and his thought coincides with that of Merleau-Ponty insofar as he too views the sensory as the site of a chiasm. *The Visible and the Invisible* (1964) provides Lyotard with the possibility of describing the complex relations between subject and object, prior to signification. He argues that for Merleau-Ponty there is "no absolutely Other" but rather an element "dividing itself and turning over […] a 'there is' that is not originally a heard utterance, but the product of a driftwork that tears the element in two, leaving the flanks in imbalance that the ethical life indeed speaks of but that belongs to the seer and the visible, that is unheard speech" (Lyotard, 2011: 5). If the figure is what renders the trace of affect visible in painting and in discourse, it does so through mere indication rather than through signification. This "there is" of unheard speech, or rather *unheard meaning*, is what Lyotard defines as the *aistheton* in *Postmodern Fables* (1999), whereby something *is made felt* without being subjected to the system of signification but instead by meddling with it. For Merleau-Ponty, however, language has the ability to unveil the position of the subject in relation to the sensible world, for he affirms a mutual collaboration between language and

perception.[29] This is the point at which Lyotard puts distance between his own thoughts and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, since for him there is a discontinuity between language and perception. The system of language is invariant and cannot retrieve the mobility of the sensible, since it denies the singularity of the enunciation. In contrast to Merleau-Ponty, who in "recuperating the Other into the Same" turns the expressiveness of the body into a language without remainder, Lyotard insists on holding on to radical otherness, as "difference." He reasons that "Phenomenology cannot possibly reach bestowal since, faithful to the West's philosophical tradition, it remains a reflection on knowledge, and the purpose of such a reflection is to absorb the event, to recuperate the Other into the Same" (Lyotard, 2011: 17). As long as perception is conceived as something that can be transferred through language, the prelinguistic and libidinal ties between subject and object will remain deferred. The figural in Lyotard determines the subject as the product of a variable release of force, of desire, and he argues that this force is unconscious and productive. In the following I will consider the claim made at the beginning of this section that Lyotard's figural can be thought of as an analogy of Freud's theory of affect as (unconscious) process. Here, I will consider Lyotard's reading of Freud's dream theory which, as we shall see, is associated with his notion of the figural and desire. It is this reading that allows Lyotard to claim that the unconscious is a non-representational mode of thought that is organised by desire and constituted by affects and affective experience (as opposed to language). This discussion will bring us closer to what I mentioned earlier as Lyotard's discovery of a critical function of seeing that is anterior to conscious thought and perception and is in fact what has the effect of inciting new ideas and prompting linguistic endeavour, thus allowing for language and creative forms to emerge.

[29] See Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1995) [1945] (pgs: 184-197), in which he claims that "Behaviour creates meanings which are transcendent to the anatomical apparatus and yet immanent to the behaviour as such, since it communicates itself and is understood" (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 189).

A central concern of *Discourse, Figure* is to establish a theory of art that can take into account Freud's insight into the relation between artistic creation and unconscious phantasy, which simultaneously separates the work of art from ideological representation. Lyotard writes:

> I suggest that each thinking is a re-thinking […] Every emergence of something reiterates something else, every occurrence is a recurrence, not at all in the sense that it could repeat the same thing or be the rehearsal or the same play, but in the sense of the Freudian notion of the Nachträglich, the way the first offence touches our mind too soon and the second too late, so that the first time is like a thought not yet thought while the second time is like a not-thought to be thought later (Lyotard, 1993: 1).

As we shall see, what he refers to as the "first offence" relates to what I understand to be affect as the figure-image (relating to a type of thought before thought, which is immediate), whereas the second offence, received "too late," refers to what we have seen so far in terms of affect as an index (in writing), which is always perceived belatedly by consciousness. In *Discourse, Figure* both these figures are developed as unconscious and relate to his notion of desire (figure-matrix) that he approaches by way of Freud's dream theory.

Lyotard, following Freud, argues that the work of art reveals its continuity with the dream. The thrust of his argument is to be found in his discussion on the four aspects of the dream-work. For Freud dreams are a direct connection to the unconscious mind. The dream-work (whose figures include condensation, displacement, considerations of representability and secondary revision) presents a paradigmatic (visual) space where figure and text are equally implicated in deconstructive activity where seeing undoes saying. As we shall see, part of Lyotard's endeavour to disassociate the dream from language, and therefore the unconscious from language, "runs counter to the current tendency to stuff all semiology into linguistics" by which he refers to the Lacanian truism that "the unconscious is structured like a language." (Lyotard, 2011: 246). Moreover, he understands dream-work as analogous to the work

or activity that creates the artwork, in that the former illustrates the processes that underlie thought perception and which transform into text or language. Both therefore entail a process that involves some form of transformation. He notes:

> The problem of the dream-work is therefore to discover how from the raw material of a statement, a qualitatively different though still meaningful object can be produced. The work is not an interpretation of the dream-thought, a discourse on discourse. Neither is it an inscription, a discourse based on discourse. It is a transformation" (Lyotard, 2011: 235).

According to Lyotard, then, the dream works on its material, utilising procedures that are "non-linguistic." (Lyotard, 2011: 235), and the dream-thought is modified by the dream-work (a process) that is irreconcilable to linguistic structure. Therefore, the dream-work does not function to communicate but rather illustrates that its operations are affective and organised by desire that fulfils a function of working (itself) out, through the imaginary capacity of the dream rather than veiling itself in, or as, a coded message. Hence, if the dream-thought undergoes a form of interpretation by the dream-work, it is not the same one as that produced in language, which operates through the structure of binary opposites. He suggests that "Thus, interpretation is work in the same way as the dream: neither commentary nor metalanguage, it is before all else an operative practise that does violence to the manifest of organisation of language, to its syntax and articulated signification" (Lyotard, 2011: 383). Freud had argued that the dream-work operates through distortion (*Entstellung*), which is traditionally understood as a way of covering up or disguising unconscious desire. However, for Lyotard, this covering up is in fact constitutive of the very force of desire, "the act itself," as opposed to a secondary function relating to dream-thought (Lyotard, 2011: 237). He therefore understands the figures of the dream-work as a process generated by force (desire) and violence (affect), which distinguishes the text of dream-thinking (which is secondary) from the transformations of the dream-work (which is primary). Here, it is worth

considering briefly the ways in which Lyotard discusses the dream-work process in relation to Freud's four figures.

The four figures that make up the processes of the dream-work are linked to Lyotard's figure-form, figure-image and figure-matrix. Condensation is viewed as a material problem of space, or of a space that "defies the space of discourse" (Lyotard, 2011: 238), and it is associated with the notion of transgression. To explain, condensation works as a transgression of the rules of discourse precisely because the dream modifies the two-dimensional, linear and syntagmatic space of linguistics. Lyotard claims that as such, it "squeeze[s] signifiers together, mixing them up." (Lyotard, 2011: 238). Signification, like matter that has been condensed together, becomes dense and opaque, which is why the dream-work necessarily covers up the dream-thought and is what he calls "precensorship." (Lyotard, 2011: 240). Displacement is discussed as the way in which the dream-thought is strewn and scattered about, in the dream's space, so that it is not entirely flattened by its condensation. In my reading, condensation is linked to Lyotard's notion of the figure-form and displacement to the figure-image, while the figure-matrix is associated with what Freud named "considerations of figurability." Lyotard discusses this as a type of "image-magic" that takes (words for) things and transforms them into images. He understands this transformation in terms of rhythm (of syntax for instance), which he argues is outside the realm of the visible (perception) but is instead a rhythmic arrangement of figures that are similar to sound or light. He writes that "Pursuing this task, we inevitably stumble, once again, on the question of the phantasm, which is pivotal. The great linguistic figures, of discourse, of style, are the expressions, right in the heart of language, of a general disposition of experience, and the phantasm is the matrix of that ordering, that rhythm" (Lyotard, 2011: 245). Here he relates Freudian

unconscious phantasy ("those uncovered by analysis as the structures underlying a manifest content") to a type of phenomenology, since the word 'phantasy' shares an etymological root with the Greek word for 'showing', 'phanein', and stems from the proto-Indo-European root that indicates 'shinning' and 'light'. The phantasm is therefore a type of visuality beyond discourse, ordered by the rhythm of the matrix. As we shall see in Chapter Four, this phenomenological argument, derived from Freud's analysis of the dream-work, brings Lyotard very close to Kristeva. Finally, secondary revision is related by Lyotard to "illustration" that does not undertake the work of reordering (the dream's chaotic and condensed and displacing operations) into something comprehensible to the ego. Rather, as we have seen, language does not intervene in the visual (to provide it with a logical ordering) but rather it is the dream that appoints language and puts it to work in its space of phantasmatic visuality. It is this work on Freud's dream theory that enables Lyotard to assert that the unconscious is not structured by language, an argument that I will view in more detail. Here, I turn to Lyotard's notion of desire and the figure-matrix and their relation to the unconscious.

Lyotard argues that the figural, in the guise of the figure-matrix, shares with "the unconscious the inability to be fixed, coded, translated or seen" (Lyotard, 2011: 233). Although it does not signify, it does have a "sense." Lyotard's return to Freud's dream-work is in part prompted by the Lacanian formulation "the unconscious is structured like a language." He argues that the figure-matrix, like Freud's unconscious, knows no negation and therefore cannot act "like a language."[30] Freud's unconscious is not a

[30] See Jacques Lacan, *Écrits* (2002). Lacan's notion of the "unconscious structured like a language" has been interpreted in different ways, since it is not clear whether he is directly linking the unconscious to language. He argues that "You see that by still preserving this 'like' [comme], I am staying within the bounds of what I put forward when I say that the unconscious is structured like a language. I say like so as not to say – and I come back to this all the time – that the unconscious is structured by a language. The unconscious is structured like the assemblages in question in set theory, which are like letters" (Lacan, 2002: 48).

structure, but, as we have seen, it is a process, and the only way to grasp it is through the recognition of its effects, distortions or transformations. The process of the unconscious (as noted in both Chapter One and earlier in this chapter) has been linked to Freud's notion of affect. Lyotard writes:

> To make the unconscious a discourse is to omit the energetic. To do so is to remain complicit with a Western ratio that destroys art along with dreaming. […] The opposition is not between form and force, for here one confuses form and structure. Force is nothing other than the energy that folds or wrinkles the text and makes of it an aesthetic work, a difference, that is, a form (Lyotard, 2011: 14).

Whereas signification closes meaning within binary oppositions, *sense* opens up meaning to both affect and space through direction, sensation and intuition. The figural belongs to an *other* order which does not occupy the space of discourse at all, and nor for that matter any space whatsoever; this is the space of desire constituted by affect. He contends that what the dream-work reveals is that the figural is a violence of transgression that is opposed to the rules of discourse: "Desire does not speak; it does violence to the order of utterance" (Lyotard, 2011: 233). Instead, he maintains that "the deep matrix in which desire is caught finds satisfaction, expressing itself in disorganized forms and hallucinatory images" (Lyotard, 2011: 268). This is precisely what renders desire a productive force in Lyotard. It does not express itself through discourse but by producing figure-forms and figure-images. What it reveals then is its own negative processes.

The figural as the figure-matrix functions through depth on the margins of discourse, which Lyotard names *laterality*. He claims that the logic of difference is "neither the flat negation that maintains the elements of a (linguistic) system apart, nor that deep-seated denial that opens the referential or representational field in front of discourse" (Lyotard, 2011: 131). What he labels depth is not a negativity that disproves the flatness of a surface; rather, this depth is "pure difference" and has the ability to

both displace or dislocate, and then recombine, the figure as the force of desire. Depth falls *beneath* perception as the phantasmatic matrix: "This laterality is rather that of the unconscious or of expression, which in the same movement offers and holds back all content. This laterality is difference, or depth" (Lyotard, 2011: 14). The figural, then, finds itself operating in the space of "unconscious desire." This laterality is what Rancière has in mind when he says that "the images of art are, as such, dissemblances" (Rancière, 2007: 7), i.e. these images of art are taken as dissemblance or (radical) difference as such, insofar as the image is taken to mean that it is always already occupied by the figural.

Lyotard's understanding of depth does not define a negativity that operates counter to a flat surface (the flat surface refers to inscription in language). Instead, depth functions in another dimension of meaning, as pure difference that both disjoins and recombines discourse and the figure as the force of desire. He argues:

> Meaning is present as absence of signification. Yet signification will seize meaning (and it can, for one can say anything) exiling it to the border of a new speech act. Here is the death drive, always embroiled in Eros-Logos. Building meaning is never anything other than deconstructing signification. No model can be assigned to this evasive figuration (Lyotard, 2011: 14).

According to Lyotard, therefore, meaning is antithetical to signification, in that the latter is a network of discontinuities which result in static dialectics, where thinking and thought become one and the same and where those elements constitutive of thought never interfere with one another. Contrastingly, the space in which the affective functions, *depth*, "will continue to exceed by a long way the power of a reflection that seeks to signify it, to include it in its language, not as a thing but as a definition" (Lyotard, 2011: 14). Therefore, depth, or difference, makes up the space – or rather the *non-space* – of affectivity which signification seeks to signify not as a thing (that is in its own singularity) but as a definition, only to find that it cannot grasp or incorporate it

in its own terms. Depth remains a non-space, because it does not refer to a topology or even a hierarchy. However, it does illustrate that expression and communication are fundamentally different and operate independently in discourse. What depth refers to, then, is a force or energy that flows through the figure and discourse, 'de-forming' the presence of the image in space but also transforming meaning in language. Lyotard claims that all discourse, whether linguistic or plastic, consists of both figural (affective) and figurative (linguistic) elements which function as two separate dimensions of meaning – on the one hand, signification, and on the other, *sense*. Whereas signification tends to reduce meaning to a grid of oppositions which are consistently articulated as binary pairs, sense opens up meaning to both affect and spatiality, and it is that which separates these two dimensions and yet always manages to rearticulate them in renewable combinations.

The activity of the dream-work exemplifies another difference between desire and language. Lyotard invokes, as we have seen, Freud's theory of *Traumarbeit* or primal phantasy in relation to the dream-work and its figures (which include condensation, displacement, figuration and secondary revision), to present the space of the visible as an exemplary space, where seeing can undo saying, through the deconstructive activity in which the text and figure engage. These figural procedures are non-linguistic, since, according to Freud, the dream-work does not *think* and is thus placed on the other side of articulated language. The dream-work neither judges nor calculates, though it does 'de-form' or even transform in many ways what we understand as rational sense. If the dream-work has sense, it will not be found in the order of language but rather in the force of transgression. Lyotard writes that "The dream-work is not a language; it is the effect on language of the force exerted by the figural (as image or as form). This force breaks the law. It hinders hearing but makes us

see: that is the ambivalence of censorship" (Lyotard, 2011: 267). According to Lyotard, the figural does not have as its primary function the requirement to act as a montage between what is said (signification) and what is seen (image); the figural deconstructs both discourse and the figure (image). Beneath the figural is difference, not just a trace or the presence of absence, but the primary process, the principle disorder and the incitement to jouissance. Therefore, what the figural hides is the figure-matrix, which is not simply an unseen but rather an unconscious force. According to Lyotard, *the figure-matrix*:

> […] is invisible, the object of originary repression, instantly laced with discourse: 'originary phantasy'. Nonetheless the figure-matrix is figure, not structure, because it is, from the outset violation of the discursive order – violence against the transformations authorised by this order. By replacing it with a schema of intelligibility, one would render unintelligible its immersion in the unconscious. This immersion is proof, however, that what is at stake is indeed the other of discourse and intelligibility (Lyotard, 2011: 268).

The figural is thus not only determined by its trace (forms and images) but by an entirely invisible "unconscious desire" that informs and is informed by the other two affective figures. It is because of desire's ability to breed figure-forms and figure-images that it is viewed as both productive and positive: "Of all the figural orders it is the most remote from communicability, the most withdrawn. It harbours the incommunicable. It breeds forms and images and it is *about* those forms and images that discourse eventually starts to speak" (Lyotard, 2011: 327). The role of transgression and transformation is a central characteristic of the figural – and therefore of affect – as a process. The figural operates by transforming structured systems of representation, and it is through this distortion (of the dream-thought by the dream-work) that the presence of desire is signalled. Desire is the organising principle of affect, and the two together (affect and desire) form a reciprocal relation. If affect is what causes violence to the order of discourse, desire is its force and what recombines affect within language in new

ways. In what follows I discuss in more detail Lyotard's notion of desire and transgression in relation to the body (the anima that he describes as body-thought).

In *Discourse, Figure* it is the voice of "the other" that writes of separation as an essential element for representation and argues that it is what Narcissus cannot attain. Lyotard holds on to this transgression as a delay (a separation), where representation marks the work of mourning (of the lost object): "Without this work of mourning there will be no representation. Narcissus is not an artist but a representation of impossible art" (Lyotard, 1988: 462). The separation, or distanciation, between image and object, word and thing, is a prerequisite of representation and language. However, at the same time, he posits that "one needn't be in language in order to be able to speak; the 'absolute object' the language-system does not speak" (Lyotard, 2011: 8), i.e. the figural is capable of bypassing the language system entirely and therefore avoiding restoration into the writing system and its structure. His insistence on this transgression distinguishes his understanding of desire from that of Deleuze. In his observations on *Anti-Oedipus*, in "Energumen Capitalism" (1972), Lyotard claims that "In Deleuze and Guattari's book you will see everywhere their utter contempt for the category of transgression." (Lyotard, 2001: 584), and so for Lyotard transgression cannot operate without a limit, whereas Deleuze and Guattari argue that there is no beyond or limit. This is why, in Lyotard's work on affectivity, it appears that he is continually arresting the process (stuttering, stalling and stopping) in contrast to Deleuze's smooth flows. I will be looking at this difference and other examples in more detail in the following chapter, but for now, while desire remains itself invisible, it has the ability to render visible the forms and images which are its trace. As such, can the figure-matrix then be viewed as an origin?

Though Lyotard argues that the matrix-figure can be taken as a starting point (a kind of organising pole to the other two orders), it cannot be seen as an origin or arché, since it confirms to the contrary that the origin is in fact missing. He claims "Yet the phantasmatic matrix, far from being an origin, testifies to the contrary that our origin is an absence of origin, and that everything that presents itself as object of an originary discourse is a hallucinatory *figure-image*, placed precisely in this initial non-site" (Lyotard, 2011: 268-9). The figure-matrix constitutes and is constituted by affects that present themselves in forms and images and have effects on the body.[31] The figure-matrix is complex, in that it is able to engender images and forms, or even verbalisation; however, in itself it is not discourse or figuration, and it belongs neither to the plastic nor to the textual space and is thus neither visible nor decipherable. Rather, the *figure-matrix*:

> […] is difference itself, and as such does not suffer even the minimum of *oppositionality* that its spoken expression requires, of image- or form-conditioning that its plastic expression entails. Discourse, image, and form: all equally pass over the figure-matrix, for it resides in all three of the spaces. The artist's works are only ever the offshoot of this matrix (Lyotard, 2011: 275-6).

Deconstruction, writes Lyotard, is the site where the matrix stands, a site which belongs to the space of the text and the space of the image, but which desire alone opens up. Deconstruction is therefore an activity of "unconscious desire," and the figure-matrix is concerned with matter which has turned into pure energy of the same kind as the immaterial power of thought. This is what Lyotard names "immaterial-materiality," or the virtual that is materialised through the body and does not refer to a particular sensible quality but is instead what is common to all of them: "the event of a passion." (Lyotard, 2011: 18). He states "The event as disturbance is always what defies

[31] It is important to note here that Lyotard's view of the body – the anima – which I will go on to discuss further down, defines the body as body-thought. This means that for Lyotard the body and thought are not binary opposites but inextricably linked to one another. His view of the body, then, is one which is attributed an intelligibility and is connected to unconscious thought processes (that are meaningful in their own right) albeit outside conscious thought perception (that the former is considered to ignite).

knowledge, or just as well, by shattering the quasi-comprehension of the body itself, putting it out of tune without itself and from things, as in emotion" (Lyotard, 2011: 18). However, according to Lyotard, the affective event does not take place in the body as realised emotion, which is always filtered through language: "The body is not the culprit of language's dismay: something else can disturb both language and the body. To accept the body as the locus of the event amounts to endorsing the defensive displacement and the vast project of rationalisation carried out by the Platonic-Christian tradition aimed at covering up desire" (Lyotard, 2011: 18). Rather, he maintains that the affective event is situated in the space of desire:

> The event cannot be situated elsewhere than in the vacant space opened up by desire. This vacancy of space is precisely the preferred site of the bestowal. This becomes immediately apparent in the anguish that undergirds all emotions, but also in the presence of words in discourse, of turns of phrase that declare zones of turbulence where the person who speaks receives (Lyotard, 2011: 18).

The body, according to Lyotard, is not the locus of the event; the event is situated in the "vacant space opened up by desire." If art is viewed as autonomous (to signification) it is because of the deep and invisible intensities that overspill into the margins of representation, which compose and move the artwork, making it come alive by making signification stutter.

According to Lyotard, what defines the relationship between the visible and the 'sayable' is co-dependency. Language poses a challenge to the visible, illustrating that the gesticulatory expanse that makes depth or representation possible is not signifiable through words but rather "spreads out on their [words] margins as what enables them to designate." (Lyotard, 2011: 8). What this illustrates is that this expanse is also the cause of the word's power of expression, as affect "accompanies them, shadows them, in one sense terminates them and in another marks their beginning" (Lyotard, 2011: 8). The function of the image is thus to *deceive* and to interfere within the text – an essential

deception whereby "The text deceives not by the ear, but by the eye," and "seeing interferes with hearing and speaking, as *desire interferes with understanding*" (Lyotard, 2011: 264; my emphasis). Unlike the acts of reading or hearing, which function at least in part within the realm of signification, the image operates as a modality of the figural, albeit not necessarily of the visible. What this means is that it is not necessary to be immersed in language in order to be able to *speak*:

> […] the language-system does not speak. What speaks is something that must remain outside of language as system and must continue to remain there even when it speaks. Silence is the opposite of discourse, simultaneously violence and beauty; but silence is the very condition of discourse since it is also on the side of the things is *which* one must speak, *that* one must express (Lyotard, 2011: 8).

Lyotard asserts that the language system does not *speak* and is conditioned to silence. For him, what 'speaks' is what remains un-representable, i.e. the figural. Affect 'speaks' in a language that cannot be understood by signification, and he notes that the "ambition is to *signify* the other of signification. […] There is no arché […] One never touches the thing itself but metaphorically" (Lyotard, 2011:13/14). On the other hand, affect indicates itself, or rather makes itself visible, through the figures or images embedded in language, and these affective bodily images create an excess or multiplicity in meaning.

Whereas designation is understood as the formal space of discourse, desire on the other hand is presented as the force of affect and takes its place in discourse as its informal space. The indexicality of affect (within language) plunges discourse into the gestural function of space (here or there) time (now and then), and while the 'there' denotes the index, for Lyotard, the 'here' of space is always grounded in the body. He claims that "It is as if language, with these 'indicators', were riddled with holes through which the gaze can slip, through which the eye can see and anchor itself outside. But this 'outside' refers back to the original intimacy between the body and its space (as well as its time)[…]" (Lyotard, 2011: 38). In other words, for him the universe of

affects and forces is nothing other than our own world, albeit without the screen of subjectivity or of our conscious mind. As well as subjects, we are also bundles of affects, events and desires, and we harbour this other(ness) inside us. In Lyotard's view, then, the intrinsic relationship between body and space is incommensurable with any experience of language, although it forms what he calls a "diadeictical" relation. What he means by this notion could be understood as a kind of dialectic but not a discourse, because it refers without signifying, it indicates but is insignifiable. In other words, the body he is referring to is intelligent and sentient as well as expressive (in its interaction with the world) in its own right. In what follows I turn to Lyotard's notion of (visual) art and its relation to affect. Whereas the previous section discussed affect as what is at the heart of the creative process, I shall now discuss the relationship between art and the body in the acts of seeing, feeling and responding to art rather than the acts of painting or writing, as emphasised in the previous two sections.

Lyotard states that, contrary to language, the figural is not concerned with creating a consistent discourse but instead deals with issues of depth and appearance whereby the body becomes a surface of inscription for desire, of flows of libidinal energy. And these flows of energy move and displace the body. Art's significance is therefore derived from its ability to "dismantle consciousness" (Lyotard, 1991: 90), that is, its ability to displace us through affect-events, whether through the body or through thought. Both the body and language are displaced and disturbed by the affective event:

> Art is thus confused with a cultural object and may give rise to anyone of the discourses that anthropological data in general lend themselves. One could do a history, sociology, or political economy of it, to mention just those few. One can easily show that its destination, anthropologically speaking, undergoes considerable modification depending on whether the artwork 'belongs' to a culture that is tribal, monarchical, theocratic, mercantile, autocratic, capitalist and so on […] But the work is not merely a cultural object, although it is that too. It harbours within it an excess, a rapture that overflows all the determinations of its 'reception' and 'production' (Lyotard, 1991b: 93).

It is clear that if art has a privileged place in Lyotard it is because art is able to produce disturbances in bodies and language which create the possibility of the new by displacing the known. Moreover, the displacement brought about by art challenges the very identity of discourse and representation as that which has been understood to confine and organise all meaning. Art in this way renders visible the human body's ability to affect and be affected, and it shows how this violent (yet positive) displacement caused by affect is at the centre of changes in the subject and her discourse, and it is affect that ensures the becoming of both.

What does Lyotard understand by art, then? He does not define it by its conceptual or dialectical elements. Nor does he define it in terms of its social functions or values, as affect removes any symbolic value we might give to it. Rather, he is more interested in how art disturbs and supports these functions and values libidinally. Art does not exist (or live) by what it says or communicates but by what affects its conducts. He writes "Painting is not something to be read, as contemporary semiologists would have it. Rather, as Klee put it, it has to be grazed, it makes visible, giving itself up to the eye like the exemplary thing it is, like naturing nature (to borrow Klee's words again), since it makes visible seeing itself" (Lyotard, 2011: 9). Painting, in his view, exemplifies the process of how all art functions, and it illustrates something that reading cannot: it makes visible the difference between reading and seeing, and it renders visible the difference of the visual order and the processes by which it functions. Lyotard's aesthetic philosophy of art conceives (visual) art as that which has the ability to reveal the tension between language and the visual, as two separate and irreconcilable regimes. But more than that, it reveals the difference between the regular readability of language and the visible fluctuations of an affective desire in images. Lyotard emphasises the difference between language games, which are always mediated by linguistic

mechanisms, and the singularity of the artistic gesture which escapes the former. Yet, despite the differences between figurative (linguistic) representation and figural (affective) presentation, he maintains that even "The figurative is merely an instance of the figural" (Lyotard, 2011: 203). Hence, for him, all artistic representation is an instance of, or invoked by, an affective experience. Art (whether literature or painting) can thus be defined in Lyotard, I argue here, as an event of passion or of the figural.[32] It is a force that draws out and makes visible the invisible moments of intensity or affective events which inhabit both art and life. But more significantly, both have the ability to produce the affect-event that disturbs or deconstructs systems of representation. According to Rodowick, the figural in Lyotard "is inseparable from an aesthetic where the most precious function of art is to create the last preserve of non-ideological meaning" (Rodowick, 2001: 2). Rodowick is right to point out that art in Lyotard produces a sense that is beyond communication and is non-ideological. This sense, though, is not associated with art alone, since the human body is the primary designator of such sense. More so, it is not all art in Lyotard's thought that is capable of creating displacement, and not all disturbances end in the creation of new art (or new thoughts). Hence, in contrast to Rodowick, I would argue that what renders art privileged in Lyotard's thought is instead its ability to capture and reveal the (unconscious) processes of affect that are tied to the visual domain, processes that involve the human body but are lost in their own immediacy and in the realm of conscious perception. Art is therefore significant because it shows that creation, whether that may be new thought, new art-work or new discourses, is an affective process and

[32] This is not to say that he views all art as the same. Rather, he spends a great deal of time and effort in distinguishing between different forms of art, illustrating how each of them operates differently. Writing, as we have seen, cannot capture affect in its immediacy but is able nevertheless to create affect by creating literary images. Visual art reveals the processes of the visual and of affect, but what unifies his theory of art is that affect is the underlying and constitutive element of all art (as well as its relation to images and language).

reveals the underlying operations that create conscious thought and perception. Art, then, not only draws attention to the limits of representation and becomes a means by which to *think differently*, but more importantly it renders visible the fluctuations of affect and desire that operate within the image as a separate space (in relation to both language and body). What we have seen up to this point is how affect relates to unconscious thought and the ability of the former to move thought in different directions whereby the new can take place. Nonetheless, affect has effects in the body as well, and these are understood as affections and are perceived as sensations to consciousness. In the following section I will be looking at Lyotard's understanding of affection and sensation, in particular its relation to the body/mind anima and how it affects the notion of subjectivity.

III Affection, Sensation and the Affective Subject

As we saw above in the account on affect and language, and in the development of affect and image, the figural is an impersonal force capable of disturbing subject identity, and it cannot be inscribed within the borders of subjectivity, since it exists outside the boundaries of the human self. The circulation of affects and their ambivalent structure create sites of identification that allow the self to be affected by something which is alien to it. As such, I propose that for Lyotard the subject is the subject of desire and affect, and desire is an irregular force that does not abide by any strict rules of coding; it regulates the intentionality of the subject insofar as it determines the presentation of an object. The subject is then marked by an intensive split: on the one hand, it affirms (awakens to) the figural in the visual, and on the other hand, it bears witness to the affect in language, which does not result in a stable copy of the desired object but in its metamorphosis. This, as we shall see in the following chapter, is

different to Deleuze, who only allows for deformation (rather than transformation). Lyotard's understanding of affect as an inhuman or alien force that inhabits the human unsettles the notion of the subject. In *The Inhuman* he offers a way by which to think of "becoming" unconventionally outside the limits of what we understand as 'human', by providing a space in which becoming can be thought of in terms of 'becoming inhuman'.

In *The Inhuman*, Lyotard observes that humans are not actually born human, as infants lack everything that humanism has distinguished as peculiarly human, namely language, the faculty of reason and the ability to control their movement. Lyotard conceptualises infancy as a "zone" of indeterminacy, inherent to the body that is open to affect and which can escape the certainties of the 'adult' laws from which it emerges. What Lyotard names "anima" (body/thought) is animated when affected or touched, while the capacity for this affection derives from the outside. He argues that the capacity to be affected is not only external but emerges from something distinctly inhuman. His concept of the inhuman is split between two meanings, and he argues that there are "two kinds of inhuman" that should not be confused: "The inhumanity of the system which is currently being consolidated under the name of development (among others) must not be confused with the infinitely secret one of which the soul is hostage" (Lyotard, 1991b: 2). On the one hand, the inhuman refers to the dehumanising effects of science carried out in the name of development. On the other hand, the infinitely secret inhuman that holds "the soul hostage" refers to his notion of infancy. In this definition, infancy describes the force(s) of affect that human beings attempt to repress and exclude but which inevitably returns to disrupt and 'haunt', but also mobilise, the body and transform its relations.

Infantile affect, or the inhuman, interests Lyotard insofar as it is a pure occurrence, i.e. it occurs prior to representation, signification *and the subject*. He advocates the necessity of escaping the notion of the Subject, which encloses the subject within fixed ideological – and therefore linguistic – position points on a grid of binary oppositions that do not allow for active resistance or radical differences. He is also hostile to the Enlightenment's faith in absolute emancipation and ideas of development that fall back into the dangerous territory of ideology and "grand narratives" that dictate what human progress should look like. What interests him in the notion of the inhuman (infancy) is that it refers back to a point in the subject-formation process that is prior to the point of being 'upgraded' to human level by various powers (linguistic, ideological and other institutional structures like religion, family, etc.), where the subject recognises him/herself. In fact, he asserts (in contrast to the discourse of the Enlightenment) that what is "'proper to humankind' is the primordial inhuman" (Lyotard, 1991b: 2). For Lyotard the inhuman condition of infancy, however, is not a stage that is overcome (as a sign of progression) but an "unharmonizable" remainder that persists into adulthood. The body of the infant figure (that is savage and unpredictable in its constitutive lack) is evoked as a site within the adult body, where infancy and inhuman affect become its primary condition. In *Lectures D'Enfance* he contends that:

> The thing that these various writings hold in abeyance, awaiting delivery bears different names, names of elision. Kafka calls it the indisputable, Sartre the inarticulable. Joyce the inappropriable. For Freud, it is the infantile, for Valery disorder, for Arendt birth. Let us baptise it infantia, that which is not spoken. An infancy that is not an age and that does not pass, with time. It haunts discourse and eludes it. […] it persists […] in constituting enfance, constituting it as lost. Unwittingly discourse harbours enfance therefore. Enfance is its remnant. If enfance stays at home, it is not in spite of but because of the fact that it lodges with the adult (Lyotard, 1991: 25).

Lyotard's model of infancy is constitutive of negative traits, namely inarticulacy, memory loss, lack of language and meaning, and it is a figure of disruption and displacement that both seeks and displays the limits of language. According to

Temenuga Trifonova, the inhuman "marks our insufficiency, our inhumanity, *makes* us human since it is an openness to the future, a promise that it is happening" (Trifonova, 2007: 140; emphasis in original). Furthermore, it defines a process of 'becoming', where the anima oscillates between infancy and adulthood, the unconscious body and conscious thought. For Lyotard, it is the state of infancy (affective, sensual and sensory) that is primary to the "speaking subject" and what is "proper" to human kind. In other words, the inhuman is that which is precisely, inherently *human*. However, the inhuman state of infancy does not require a conscious "I," author or addressor, since it is pre-egoic. Hence, the inhuman interestingly places the human back into language, only this time in a different form.

In *The Inhuman*, Lyotard develops a theory of the body in which affectability, or *possibility*, plays a central role. It is in this discussion that he moves away from the world of affect to discuss the world of affection and sensation, and therefore the effects of affect on the human body. In a chapter called "Something like: 'Communication… without communication'," Lyotard argues that communication outside signification is possible insofar as we are open to receiving affect as a meaningful event. This means that the body is capable of communicating (by receiving affect) prior to thought, reason, judgment and language. Here, communication is instantaneous. He argues:

> In the conflict surrounding the word communication, it is understood that the work, or at any rate anything which is received as art, induces a feeling – before inducing an understanding – which, constitutively and therefore immediately, is universally communicable, by definition. Such a feeling is thereby distinguishable from a merely subjective preference. This communicability, as a demand and not as a fact, precisely because it is assumed to be originary, *ontological*, eludes communicational activity, which is not receptiveness but something which is managed, which is done (Lyotard, 1991b: 109).

Instead of trying to harmonise the theory of the human and the inhuman without leaving a remainder as to what humanism has tried to do, Lyotard views this initial inhumanness of infancy as something that persists as an unharmonisable remainder that haunts and

disturbs throughout adulthood. Instead, he attempts to call it into permanent questioning through the unsettling effect of the Real or the sublime. How, then, does the notion of the inhuman affect the notion of subjectivity?

A sense of identity for the subject only exists in his or her own recognition within the symbolic order. Displacements created by affect-events expose the impossibility of recognising him/herself in a present structure or in linguistic formulations. In short, it reveals an inner conflict between the subject's current place within language and the one caused by displacement whereby the latter creates a sense of agitation that becomes the driving force and what prompts a subject's identity and agency into questioning, and as a result into language, in order to define his/her role as object. As a result, Lyotard replaces the idea of the emancipation of the Subject with a focus on the body as that which contains and expresses the resistances that displace the subject. In *The Inhuman* he argues for a theory of becoming, of a subject-in-process, disturbed and displaced by affect-events. His description of the body is telling:

> The body is unique. But so singular that it is neither known nor understood. We do not refer here to the body in time and space which is claimed by the doctor, the legislator, the recruiting sergeant, the manager and the sexologist. It is neither the sensory body or the psychologist nor the cultured normed body of the anthropologist, but the monster inhabited by the Thing and, because of this, endowed with spatiality, temporality and materiality other than that known by the experts or even our own bodily consciousness (Lyotard, 1991b: 577).

The body is understood here as minimal and monstrous, involved in a primal and innate infancy determined above as the Freudian Thing, or what Lacan calls "the real." In *Anamnesis of the Visible: Theory, Culture and Society* Lyotard explains this as the "minimal soul," which is the individual thought of a body, albeit a body capable of thought and creativity through a "touching" that renders the body-subject an infant. He writes that "This event touches the soul-body, what I call here *anima minima*, and this touch is not represented. Lacking language, there is not yet here what Freud calls

Vorstellung, or 'representation'. It's too early. It's before. The soul-body is infant, without speech. The infant does not know how to speak, the infant cannot represent" (Lyotard, 2012: 557). Lyotard's anima minima, or minimal soul, exists only through the disturbance of affection as an event that displaces subjective consciousness in both the body and in time. However, this affection as a minimal condition is both embodied and temporal like a sensation. He notes:

> But sensation is also the affection of 'the subject' – one should say: the body/thought which I shall call: anima – feels on the occasion of a sensible event. True or false, aesthesis immediately modifies the anima, displacing its disposition (its hexis) in the direction of well-being or ill-being. Philosophical aesthetics allows this connection as a principle. This principle, however, presupposes a substance-soul with the faculty of being affected (Lyotard, 1997: 242)[33].

The affective body that emerges in Lyotard is untameable, monstrous and unknowable; in short, savage. Sensations are ungraspable by consciousness in the same way that unconscious affect remains elusive to diachronic time. This monstrous infancy exists only when pushed out of anaesthesia, thereby inciting a shift from idleness and inactivity, for "the soul comes into existence dependent on the sensible, thus violated and humiliated" (Lyotard, 1997: 243). Affection, then, involves a sensation induced by affect-events that is both traumatic and uncomfortable for the person experiencing them.

Infancy, therefore, takes on a sinister quality, in that it is viewed as a form of violence that inhabits the soul as a parasite. This enigmatic and faceless "Thing" that Lyotard borrows from Lacan (tinted with Levinas's face of the Other) is constitutive of the monstrous body and is the driving force productive of art and that which evokes its power and force.[34] In *Postmodern Fables (1999)* Lyotard aligns this mysterious "thing"

[33] Hexis is an Aristotelian notion which explains a disposition related to the notion of 'having' and 'possessing', or a 'state'.

[34] In "Lyotard: Towards a Postmodern Philosophy," James D. Williams argues that "Where Lyotard develops a fleeting politics around an event beyond representation and understanding, Levinas develops an ethics based on a relation of a self to other persons. This relation is close to the relation of a self to a Lyotard-event, insofar as the other person cannot be known or accurately represented to a self. […] This

with the violence of shock, or the experience of the sublime, that is constitutive here of the sensing body. The sublime can be viewed as a fourth dimension of the figural, where the "avant-garde task is to undo the spiritual assumptions regarding time. The sense of the sublime is the name of this dismantling" (Lyotard, 1991b: 109). Furthermore, Lyotard claims:

> Here, existing is not the fact of a conscience aiming at its noematic correlative nor that of a permanent substance. Existing is to be awoken from the nothingness of disaffection by something sensible over there. An affective cloud lifts at that moment and deploys its nuance of a moment. Sensation makes a break in an inert non-existence. It alerts, it should be said, it *exists* it. What we call life proceeds from a violence exerted from the outside on a lethargy. The *anima* exists only as forced. The *aistheton* tears the inanimate from limbo in which it inexists, it pierces its vacuity with its thunderbolt, it makes a soul emerge out of it. A sound, a scent, a colour draw the pulsing of a sentiment out of the neutral continuum, out of the vacuum (Lyotard, 1997: 243; emphasis in original).

In Lyotard's reading of the Kantian sublime, the sublime is what throws the link between concept and representation into disarray. The sublime is "witness to indeterminacy," and in fact this is its key quality, giving rise to ambivalent or contradictory sensations where thought is caught in a suspended judgment. The sublime arouses a feeling of pain because the faculty of imagination is incapable of creating a representation. This displacement gives rise to a sensation of pleasure, since it allows for the creation of endless new connections that showcase the limitless power of thought and reflection. This faculty of the mind does not overcome or compensate for the finiteness of the senses, and what the senses in collaboration with imagination fail to conceive is not recuperated in thought; instead, it is registered as irrecoverable, which precisely prods the anima to think. The Kant with which Lyotard sympathises is the one that radicalises duality as a heterogeneity that leaves a remainder.[35] The sublime

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explains why the other person is in fact, referred to more precisely, as the Other. In Levinas, this relation to the Other leads to an ethics based on an obligation to the Other; put simply there is an obligation to respect the otherness of others – do not act as if others are the same as yourself" (Williams, 1998: 121).

[35] See: Jean-François Lyotard's *Lesson on the Analytic of the Sublime* (1994) and Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (1790).

liberates painting from representation by asking it to show what cannot be demonstrated. In *Presenting the Unrepresentable: 'the sublime'* he takes the theory of the sublime from Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. He writes:

> That which is not demonstrable is that which stems from Ideas and for which one cannot cite (represent) any example, case in point, or even symbol. The universe is not demonstrable; neither is humanity, the end of history, the moment, the species, the good, the just etc. – or, according to Kant, absolutes in general – because to represent is to make relative, to place in context with conditions of representation. Therefore, one cannot represent the absolute, but one can demonstrates that the absolute exists – through 'negative representation', which Kant called the abstract (Lyotard, 1982: 63).

What we are then witnessing in the experience of the sublime is another differend. Lyotard privileges abstract art because it detaches the artwork or image from its mimetic and representative functions, and it illustrates the un-representable affective register not through language but through colour and form. In addition, it escapes representation but captures affect directly, *as lost*. When painting is in the form of abstraction, representation is martyred, in other words it is represented as lost or missing, and the painting remains indeterminate and the judgment suspended. It thus remains a problem. This monstrous quality of affectability aligns with the excitable zone of infancy that eludes consciousness and conscious action, driving desire to be touched by affection and excitation through the singular (aesthetic) experience, since "existing is to be awoken from the nothingness of disaffection by something sensible over there" (Lyotard, 1997: 243). The anima is thus both threatened by affect's "nuance of a moment" and at the same time is utterly dependent on ("violently wishes for") these sensory modes of affection for its existence (Lyotard, 1997: 243). He notes "the soul remains caught between the terror of its impending death and horror of its servile existence" (Lyotard, 1997: 244).

The body, whether human or inhuman, is for Lyotard neither fixed nor closed or singular, rather it remains open, both to *affecting others* as much as to *being affected by others*. The body is part of a process that oscillates between infancy and adulthood, individuality and subjectivity, inhuman and human. In other words, instead of progressing in a linear fashion it operates like the 'libidinal band', or skin in *Libidinal Economy*, where the two sides run counter to each other, thus confusing any possible determination between inside and outside.[36] In fact, the band has neither an inside nor an outside. In his graphic portrayal of "the great ephemeral skin," Lyotard describes the libidinal body as being cut open, revealing that its interior is alien to what we normally view and understand as a body. In addition, it becomes unfamiliar, highlighting the disruptive potential of the figure, and so in this description the inside has become the outside, and the hollow chamber (or volume) of the body has become a solid (a mass) and space can no longer be understood as containing objects, since its inside-out form prevents this movement and renders it impenetrable. This formation of a dislocated body causes agitation or frustration, as it does not conform to what we recognise as the body. But here it is the body itself that will attempt to form new inner equivalents so as to recapture or re-establish familiarity. What this shows is that perception is not entirely limited to conscious thought perception, for what we 'recognise' or find awakened here is our internalised spatial practices, the ones which are hidden from thought processing, and thus any identification mobilised is first and foremost an unconscious embodied one.

Lyotard's ontology of affective events disturbs the notion of subjectivity, and in particular the notion of the linguistic subject, and produces a very different sort of "speaking subject." It is no longer language that speaks through a body-subject that is

[36] See: Jean-François Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy* (2004)[1974] (pgs:1-3).

subjected to the mechanisms of signification or logos; instead, it is language that is now dependent on the body's singular relations and unique passage through the world. Every single body, and the passage it traverses, is distinctly unique to the specific individual, and since no individual occupies or traverses the exact same space or time, the body remains unique. In *Discourse, Figure* the body is not only expressive, it is also the instigator of thought and language as meaning. The affective body in the process is open to the disruption created by the release of irrational affective forces that it contains but which are not consistent with it. It is no longer language which expresses affect but rather language is the way in which affect expresses itself. Furthermore, affect determines a subject's individuality at the same time as it subjects us to the affective force or energy of an 'other', in which case the body is vulnerable and permeated easily by virtual forces that are not seen (in the conventional sense) or even understood but rather felt instead. For Veronica Vasterling this capability of the body to be affected by what is outside it implies a certain vulnerability and explains why affect is a "disabling" condition inasmuch as it is an "enabling" one: "Affectibility implies vulnerability because the body may be overwhelmed by what affects it. And this vulnerability of the body in turn implies that the capacity of expression may break down. To be overwhelmed by what affects me more often than not means that I am incapable of expressing or articulating what affects me" (Vasterling, 2003: 214). Vasterling is right to emphasise the vulnerability of the body in Lyotard's theory of affect, since his notion of the anima is open to forces that affect it inasmuch as it is capable of affecting others. However, the notion of the inhuman emphasises affection (sensation), and, as we have see in Spinoza too (in Chapter One), affection is reactive or passive.

It is important to note, then, that in a similar way to Deleuze (and Spinoza) Lyotard views affect as active and affection as passive. This is not the view held by

Rancière, however, who critiques Lyotard and Deleuze both for their views on art and the notion of affect as not going far enough. Jacques Rancière writes:

> Art no longer carries any promise. It is still seen as a form of resistance, in memory of Adorno. But this term takes on a whole new meaning. Resistance becomes nothing other than the anamnesis of the 'Thing', the infinite re-inscription, in written lines, painted brush-strokes, musical timbres, of subjugation to the law of the Other that does us violence, or indulgence in the law of the self that leads us into the enslavement of commercial culture (Rancière, 2009: 105).

It is important to note that Lyotard's view of art differs from that of Freud, who understands it as symptom and the exteriorisation of the artist's phantasy. Lyotard maintains instead that the work of art goes beyond its theorisation as a form of wish fulfilment, and he states that the truly revolutionary aspect of an artwork is un-fulfilment: "I believe that what is truly revolutionary is precisely to hope for nothing" (Lyotard, 1991: 41). Rancière's objection in this regard is that Lyotard "retains the function of the sign," even if it is to invert it. Resistance, according to him, is nothing other than the anamnesis of the lost "thing" that demands its own infinite re-inscription through art. For Rancière, therefore, Lyotard is merely reinstating an enslavement of the subject, though this time it is through the sensory rather than a language-based approach. Rancière is right to argue that the affective register takes the place of language as the subject's primary order of functioning and that the subject is a merely reactive one, since the anima as seen previously is pushed and probed into existence. Lyotard replaces linguistic intention with *affective tension* and suggests:

> Our 'intentions' are tensions (to link in a certain way) exerted by genres upon the addressors and addresses of phrases, upon their referents, and upon their senses […] There is no reason to call these tensions intentions or wills, except for the vanity of ascribing to our account what is due to occurrence (das Ereignis) and to the differend it arouses between ways of linking unto it (Lyotard, 1988: 136).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the affect-event does not *place* the subject but rather *displaces* the anima into existence. Lyotard appeals to the force of the 'demand'

of affect as a pull or tension that arouses the figural, and this space is engineered from contradiction and ambiguity and has to be worked (and re-worked) each time it is approached. Standing in representation, "one seeks out plastic and libidinal events" (Lyotard, 2011: 10); hence, the self does not merely passively receive desire, but it always has to look for it, to seek out "plastic and libidinal events," which also means that there is in Lyotard some room left to claim power over it and even responsibility for it. Yet, he claims that his notion of passibility is neither passive nor active but beyond both, which is problematic insofar as the notion of affect is meant to provide some scope for resistance in and to the Symbolic world of language.

As mentioned previously, Lyotard, through his notion of the inhuman (and infancy), places the human back into language, albeit in a different form. Nonetheless, the notion of the infant that Lyotard takes from Freud is problematic, and he himself describes it as more animal-like (and monstrous), in that an infant is helpless and cannot think for or beyond its own self. He also claims that it registers itself as a demand for construction and has a tendency (demands) to be revised continually. In adulthood it becomes a sentient intelligence and behaviour that renders the communal space of language and symbolic forms possible. Yet, the autonomy of affect and desire in this paradigm is, as Rancière suggests, problematic, since the subject of language emphasised in the linguistic turn is now exchanged for the subject of affect, where the affective subject does not acquire active participation in what it resists – it knows that it is resisting, and that is all. The subject is therefore resistant to various differends that make an appearance in its line of vision. However, these can only be acknowledged in signification and conscious thought processes, while he argues that in the realm of language these remain somewhat confused. That Lyotard identifies art as a powerful form of resistance (of an affective dissensus) is correct, in my view, though he does not

offer any other form of political resistance, in which case he thereby breaks down political activity into art, and a single form through the creation of art. What is more, the art that he chooses to emphasise and privilege (like abstract art) indicates disagreement, but that is all. This begs the question: Can a political dissensus, in the affective form that Lyotard describes (in particular one that cannot be addressed by language), be political at all? Since the power of the symbolic to address political issues is weakened, what seems to remain is a type of silent resistance to anything that is symbolic. It is Lyotard's notion of the infant and the transgression that it entails (as we shall see in the following chapter) that Deleuze takes issue with, since he argues that the infant, which lacks language, and persists into adulthood reintroduces deficiency into Lyotard's paradigm of desire. I will address this issue and others in the following chapter.

Conclusion

Affect, in Lyotard and, as we shall see in the next two chapters, in Deleuze and Kristeva, refers to the non-signifying elements that saturate images of representation but do not belong to representation. These operate alongside the signifying units of language, and together affect and signification are productive in creating art and instigating creativity. As a result, the notion of affect cannot but be studied outside its relation to images and language. More importantly, what is highlighted in Lyotard's theory of affect is the reciprocal relation between affect and image whereby the former is neither dismissed as merely being deceptive nor understood as being merely a representation tied to its linguistic function. Instead, the image is of vital significance to the notion of the figural and is located on the side of affect and the sensory. It therefore holds a double function, in that it is split between language and affect. In fact, like most concepts in Lyotard, there is a re-doubling, as each of the notions that he develops

breaks away from what we usually understand by them and is re-defined, re-created, in what might be called an affective equivalent (representation, negativity, desire, image, language, meaning – all of these have double senses – the image in language is not the same as the affective image, meaning in language is not the same as affective meaning etc.). A reason for this is the double function of the image. For instance, in representation the image produces linguistic meaning; however, when in it is in its own domain it produces affective sense, and the same could be said of negativity and desire. In contradistinction to a lot of recent works on the notion of affect, which insist on holding on to the definition of affect as feeling and placing emphasis on the body, I argue that the notion of affect informs us more about the nature of images and thought processes as predominantly sensory and perhaps, surprisingly, by emphasising the mind (perhaps more so than the body). The image becomes a sort of threshold along which both language and affect cross paths, and it is the notion of the image that allows us to speak about affects when language is irremediably incapable. The notion of affect in Lyotard, and as we shall see in the following chapters in Deleuze and Kristeva, is developed as being inherently paradoxical. For instance, the notion of an affect-event is an oxymoron, since an event is the fact or case that something happens, while affect is constantly evolving and is never in its place. Although affect is developed as unconscious, affect as an event designates a form of conscious awareness, so it can be explained as what occurs to language as an event but what belongs to and evolves in the field of vision. As I will show in the following chapter, it is this perception of affect (despite certain differences in his line of development) that we also find in Deleuze.

Chapter 3: Gilles Deleuze: Art, Affect and Creation

This chapter will address Gilles Deleuze's conceptualisation of affect and its relationship to language as that which gives rise to art and art practices as well as subjective processes, and it will include works that were written in collaboration with Félix Guattari.[1] Deleuze's work on affect is perhaps more widely known in comparison to that of Lyotard; however, he himself acknowledges a debt to *Discourse, Figure* [1971] (2011), claiming that "The importance of this book is that it marks the first generalised critique of the *signifier*. It tackles this notion which for so long has exerted a kind of terrorism in literature, and has even contaminated art or our comprehension of art" (Deleuze, 2004b: 214). Deleuze, like Lyotard, asserts the limits of structuralist linguistic theory, addressing the problem of expression and meaning as an affective and sensory issue rather than a linguistic one. Unlike Lyotard's return to and revival of Freud's notion of (unconscious) affect Deleuze's relation to psychoanalysis in uneasy and problematic. He seeks instead a different trajectory by reviving Spinoza's conceptualisation of affect and affection from *Ethics* (1677). However, as we shall see, both writers use the notion of affect to express similar concerns on the nature of representation as it is theorised and takes shape in the so-called "linguistic-turn," and they share a similar understanding of art and seek to bring affect back into the discussion and questions that relate to art.

[1] The focus of this chapter is Deleuze's notion of affect and its relation to literature and art, predominantly as it is developed in *The Logic of Sensation* (2005) and *The Logic of Sense* (1969), works that are sole-authored by Deleuze. This chapter, therefore, emphasises Deleuze as opposed to Deleuze and Guattari. However, Deleuze's notion of affect is crucial to other concepts in his work. He develops a series of terms that are informed and inform his notion of affect and become crucial to the way he understands affect and affection, especially in relation to art. Throughout this chapter particular concepts relevant to Deleuze and Guattari's common body of work make their way into the text, because, as we shall see, their collective work on affective ontology cannot be separated from Deleuze's individual work on art and literature.

In *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (2005) [1981], Deleuze borrows the notion of the *figural* from *Discourse, Figure* (1971), and like Lyotard he understands it as an affective or semiotic register that does violence to signification and destabilises systems of representation in art and subjectivity. Deleuze's work on affect, and the figural in particular, shares many similarities to Lyotard's, because in both the figural is an affective process that refers to a way of 'seeing' that moves beyond seeing as 'reading'. Furthermore, they both differentiate between art forms by the different ways in which they use language. Deleuze, for instance, argues that whereas writers think in words and as such cannot capture the figural (through language) by making a (major) language "stutter," writing becomes *style* or expression that incites new percepts and new affects. In contrast, painters think in lines (images) and colours and are capable of capturing blocks of sensation more directly while preserving them within the fabric of the artwork. Art, then, not only draws attention to this virtual flux, but it also makes visible the underlying processes that an aesthetic encounter entails. This is the understanding of the figural that Deleuze recognises in Francis Bacon's use of paint and the (mid-) movement of sensation captured in and within Bacon's Figures. For Deleuze, however, the figural is not merely what ruptures the figurative (representation), but it is also a disruption through the Figure (which I understand here as body-thought). If the affective register in Lyotard denotes a form of violence that emphasises affective displacement, for Deleuze, as we shall see, the affective-event is a relational force that happens in an in-between space (deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation) and is a rupture through the Figure itself. This difference has an effect on how they each reconfigure the notion of desire as productive and creative. Their differences on the notion of desire will be discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter.

I view Deleuze's writing on art (painting in particular) and literature as approaching affect in two different ways. Literature exposes the relationship between affect and signification as a complex process involving the material unravelling of (affective) events that give rise to affective becomings. And through the notion of the figural, Deleuze illustrates that painting is capable of arresting this process and showing that the force of the figural is that of a productive unconscious desire. What Deleuze's work on affect illustrates is that he reconfigures the subject as an affective becoming which finds its force in desire. However, desire here is an immanent force of relation (in opposition to Lyotard's emphasis on displacement and deconstruction). In this chapter I will be addressing the similarities and differences between Deleuze and Lyotard and will focus on the importance of affect in relation to literary and artistic creation. In Deleuze's writing on affect, it is art that informs our understanding thereof, since art, he argues with Guattari in *What is Philosophy?* (unlike philosophy that thinks in concepts), thinks in percepts and affects. Art informs us on the processes of affect, and affect informs us on the processes of art. The processes of affect, made visible in art, are exemplary of the processes of all representation. In this chapter I view the relationship between affect and art and the processes that they entail primarily through *The Logic of Sensation*.

Affects in Deleuze are sub-personal events that evoke intense vibrations within language, although they do not define a personal feeling or named relation.[2] In Deleuze the theory of affect is also a theory of becoming – it is the change or variation that occurs when bodies collide, an experiential force that operates in a dynamic of desire

[2] In *Negotiations* (1995) Deleuze argues that "passions dissolve persons not into something undifferentiated but into a field of various persisting and mutually interdependent intensities […] Love's a state of, a relation between persons, subjects. But passion is a sub-personal event that may last as long as a lifetime […] it is very difficult to express, to convey – a new distinction between affective states" (Deleuze, 1995: 116).

within an assemblage, in order to manipulate meaning and relations, thereby informing and fabricating desire and generating intensity. In *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Deleuze argues that life is the object of art and literature, and the passage of life can only be felt or seen in a process of creation. What Deleuze understands by Life is a process of 'becoming' that involves the immanent process of production or creation and is neither an *arché* nor a *telos* but rather a pure process that always functions in, or as, the middle. Additionally, it advances by means of experimentations and unpredictable and unforeseen becomings, a process which provides the non-organic and impersonal power of Life, its consistency and autonomy pulling us into its own becoming. Deleuze and Guattari argue:

> […] art is never an end in itself; it is only a tool for blazing life lines, in other words, all those real becomings that are not produced only *in* art, and all of those active escapes that do not consist in fleeing *into* art, taking refuge in art, and all those positive deterritorialisations that never reterritorialise on art, but instead sweep it away with them toward the realms of the a-signifying, a-subjective and faceless (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 208).

The authors claim that art always involves and is involved in the greater process of Life and becoming. And affect-events are precisely these *becomings*, and so their work on affective ontology cannot be separated from their work on art and literature. In this chapter I will be taking many different terms put forth by Deleuze in his various works (including ones co-written with Guattari) and will attempt to synthesise these concepts in a relational study of his theory of affect.[3] The relationship between affect and language (as well as affect and becoming) is a question that I will be exploring

[3] The concept of *schizophrenization*, or *schizoanalysis*, is used to explain affective assemblages and is linked to his understanding of language. The notion of the *assemblage* as a site of multiplicity where affective forces compete and coalesce is taken from *A Thousand Plateaus* (2004). The notion of *difference* is taken from *Anti-Oedipus* (1983) and is used to describe how art functions. And both *What is Philosophy?* (1994) and *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (1981) provide the basis upon which to understand the figural, the inhuman and the diagrammatic structure of painting, while *Essays Critical and Clinical* (1997) is devoted largely to literature and thus is utilised for exploring the inner workings and relation between literature and becoming. The concept of minor literature is taken from Deleuze and Guattari's, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1986).

throughout this chapter, but in the first section I will be considering the relationship between affect and literature as it is developed in *Kafka: A Minor Literature* (1986) and *The Logic of Sense* (1969). What will follow is an account of the significance of affect in relation to Deleuze's notion of art regarding the figural, specifically in *The Logic of Sensation* (1981). But first I would like to take a closer look at what Deleuze means by affect.

Defining Affect

Deleuze takes his definition of affect from Spinoza. Affect in Spinoza is viewed as chance encounters between bodies that form relations based on corporeal capacity (a specific body's power to act). He had claimed that "By affect I understand affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the idea of these affections. Therefore, if we can be the adequate cause of any of these actions, I understand by the affect an action: otherwise a passion" (Spinoza, 1994: 70). Deleuze holds on to the Spinozist distinction between affect and affection, citing that whereas an *affection* is the state of a body that has suffered the action of another body, affects are the variations of power that seize the body and render it capable of acting. Affects are seen as the primary condition of a body, and in contrast to affections they are viewed as active, in that they regulate the body's variations in relation to the power to act. He claims that affects "are passages, becomings, rises and falls, continuous variations of power" (Deleuze, 1997: 139). Deleuze here, following Spinoza's thought, posits that affections are states of bodies and affects are variations of power. The latter refers to signs of increasing or decreasing levels of action and the former to increasing or decreasing levels of pleasure or joy (where the body's capacity to act increases), and sad or painful affects (whereby the

body's capacity to act decreases). Affection *indicates* the affect and is visible only as a trace or sign; Deleuze names these *scalar* signs.[4] Affects generate affections, and as they are signs of movement-increase and rest-decrease they are named *vectorial* signs. Affections are therefore the effect of an affect, viewed or sensed as a sign or trace. These two types of signs are unlike words, in that neither "*have objects as their direct referents*. They are states of bodies (affections) and variations of power (affects) each of which refer to the other. Signs refer to signs" (Deleuze, 1997: 141). The term 'sign' here does not refer to a linguistic sign, that is, the sign that Ferdinand de Saussure understands as constituted by the signifier/signified opposition, because, unlike the linguistic sign, neither affect nor affection have a referent, as they do not refer to any object and do not speak in reference to something; they lack an addressor, since affect and affection, as pointed out above, only ever refer to one another. As we shall see later, they are also missing a conscious 'I' and are therefore subject-less. In other words, Deleuze, in a similar manner to Lyotard, understands affect as what evades and breaks down the semantico-referential axis as well as the axis of address that language requires in order to speak. But rather than developing his notion through Freud, he instead derives his notion of the 'sign' directly from Spinoza. Deleuze states that "A sign, according to Spinoza, can have several meanings, but it is always an *effect*. An effect is first of all the trace of one body upon another body. It is an *affectio*- for example, the effect of the sun on our body, which 'indicates' the nature of the affected body and merely 'envelopes' the nature of the affecting body" (Deleuze, 1997: 138-9; emphasis in original). As a result, the signs that interest Deleuze are not linguistic signs but affective-events, and these escape signification that seeks to represent and are unmediated experiences that merely 'indicate' that something has occurred. Since affect

[4] Affections are therefore what we saw Lyotard describe in the previous chapter as affect-events that leave a trace in language and are perceived as an index (rather than a sign).

eludes conscious awareness, it can only be known by its effects, that is, by its traces and signs in the order of language and representation, and this is precisely what Deleuze calls an "affection." Affections, then, are the traces of affect in language/representation. The affect itself, however, is beyond this trace and is therefore also an issue of perception, thus raising questions regarding the image that Deleuze explains through his concept of the percept.

Percepts are what Deleuze names "pure affects" and are no longer signs but Singularities or Essences that involve a process and operate in the undecidable: "perhaps it [pure-affect] surpasses all demonstration inasmuch as it operates in the 'undecidable'" (Deleuze, 1997: 149). In Spinoza the percept is aligned with intuition and involves an immediate insight into the true nature of something. For Deleuze a percept is defined as that which makes visible the invisible forces that populate the universe, which affect us and make us become. Percepts are pure affects, or affect-events, which are irreducible to the affections or perceptions of the self. In *Negotiations* Deleuze states "Percepts aren't perceptions, they are packets of sensations and relations that outlive those who experience them. Affects aren't feelings they're becomings that spill over beyond whoever lives through them" (Deleuze, 1995: 137). Both the affect and the percept are *impersonal* insofar as Deleuze conceives them as sharing a particular trait that involves the dissolution of the ego (particularly visible in art). Percepts "are packets of sensations and relations" that can be understood in a similar way to childhood perception, where the child is unable to distinguish between itself and the outside world and therefore challenges conventional notions of forms and subjects. Hence, percepts which "outlive those who experience them," as well as affects that constitute becomings and "spill over beyond whoever lives through them," enable Deleuze to explore subjectivity, or rather to identity formation outside consciousness

and language. For him, becoming relies on the force of affects and percepts that are both pre-individual and therefore non-egoic and yet collective. This reframing or re-writing of the notion of subjectivity (rejected on the basis that it is often mistakenly taken to mean consciousness) as a fluid becoming through affects and percepts is particularly evident in Deleuze's discussion on literature. I will be coming back to this discussion in further detail below, but first I will take a closer look at how Deleuze's definition of affect differs from that of Spinoza.

What I aim at demonstrating in this chapter is that Deleuze's understanding of affect extends beyond the definition that he derives from Spinoza. There are two important aspects to Spinoza's theory of affects. The first is that he recognises the ontological dimension of affects and defines everything by its capacity to affect and be affected. The second aspect relates to a political and social dimension of affects. For Spinoza, affects not only orient individual striving but can only do so in and through encounters and relations with *others*. Affects in Spinoza then define not only the various states of subjective life (from very basic emotions such as joy and sadness to more complex emotion such as aspiration and envy), but they also define just about everything in terms of relations, since everything has the capacity to affect and be affected. For Spinoza affects are an ontological category, in that we are constituted by our affects and we are also individuated by them, since affective composition will differ from person to person. One of the ways in which Deleuze's definition of affect exceeds Spinoza's is identified by Brian Massumi, who points out that the Spinozist definition lacks the clear distinction between affect and emotion onto which Deleuze strives to hold. Massumi claims:

> An emotion is a subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience, which is from that point onwards defined as personal. Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional consensual point of insertion of/into intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction

> circuits, into function and meaning. It is owned and recognized. It is crucial to theorize the difference between affect and emotion (Massumi, 20021: 28).

Affects in Deleuze are therefore strictly differentiated from the category of emotions defined linguistically as "owned and recognised." Here, I would like to point out another way in which Deleuze's definition of affect exceeds Spinoza's beyond this terminological difference (although in some ways it is related). What Massumi identifies in differentiating between emotion and affect in Deleuze's work is that he remains engaged critically with the questions and issues that emerge from the 'linguistic turn', and thus he distinguishes between the encounters/relations created through or by signification with those that fall outside its paradigm. This is something that is of course non-existent in Spinoza. In Deleuze's work on art and literature, which I deal with in this chapter, affect can be defined as the non-signifying elements that remain invisible within or beneath modes of representation. These non-signifying affective images (or non-representational thoughts) operate autonomously to signification and escape what Lacan calls the "Symbolic." Nonetheless, they also function alongside it, and together they form a productive process that is creative and works to create artworks. This definition of affect no longer adheres strictly to the one provided by Spinoza, and instead it aligns Deleuze with the other two writers that I work with in my thesis.

To explain this point, as already mentioned, affect in Spinoza is characterised as a chance encounter or relation that either increases or diminishes a body's capacity to act. Spinoza (and Deleuze respectively) rejects the idea that the mind and body should be seen as two distinct entities. Rather, what affect explains is the corporeal movement of entities or bodies interacting with one another, forming relations with one another and the changes or variations that occur as a result. If the body in Spinoza is constituted by affective encounters that are conceived as joyful and/or affective relations of crisis

(sad affects), bodies in Deleuze are understood as *forces*. Although, it is frequently noted that his understanding of affect and the body is an extension of Spinoza's theory, his conceptualisation of the body as force illustrates otherwise. John Protevi claims "Deleuze and Guattari follow Spinoza, defining affect as a body's ability to act and be acted upon what it can do and what it can undergo" (Protevi, 2009: 49). This notion (body as force), as we shall see later, is linked to the conception of the *Body without Organs,* elaborated by Guattari, and their concept of desire. The body-soul that Deleuze writes about is no longer merely defined by chance encounters and relations or collisions but rather by its productive or *creative* function in its capacity to produce new bodies (new art) and new understandings. Deleuze writes:

> Bodies (and souls) are *forces*. As such they are not only defined by their chance encounters and collisions (state of crisis). They are defined by relationships between an infinite number of parts that compose each body and already characterise it as a 'multitude'. There are therefore processes of composition and relationships that suit them or not. Two or several bodies will form a whole, in other words, another body, if they compose their respective relationships in concrete circumstances. And it is the highest exercise of the imagination, the point where it inspires understanding, to have bodies (and souls) meet according to composable relationships (Deleuze, 2006: 192).

This definition of the *body as force* impacts upon Deleuze's notion of affect. Although he does not define what he means by force exactly, we can no longer explain affect and body by their relations or chance encounters; rather, force here implies a creative function that does not merely explicate the body in movement and in rest, or even through the changes that affect is capable of effectuating in bodies and world. This affective force (located *in* bodies but not *of* bodies) is defined instead by its creative function, that is, its ability to create or produce entirely new bodies through recombination (deformation in art/painting). This is precisely why I understand affect in Deleuze as pre-individual and non-representational affective images that operate together with, or alongside elements of signification (representational thoughts), to create new bodies and constitute (new) events or relations.

This is the definition of affect that I find corresponds to Deleuze and Lyotard as well as to Kristeva's notion of the semiotic. This is not to say that there are no differences between them, though. As already mentioned, Deleuze and Lyotard emphasise different aspects of affect: Deleuze highlights it as a relational force and Lyotard as displacement/transgression (and, as I will show in the following chapter, the focus on transgression is what links Lyotard with Kristeva and differentiates the latter from Deleuze). Although I will be viewing this difference in more detail towards the end of the chapter, it is necessary here to explain why this is a sticking point between these two writers. The term 'relation' implies connection, yet affect's primary function in both writers is to break apart the meanings and sense in the signifying chain, the ideologies formed in representation, and to create new ones through language and art.[5] David R. Cole argues in "The Actions of Affects: Others using Language and the Language that We Make…" that affects in Deleuze have two effects or serve two functions: the first is to undermine scholarly authoritarianism and the second is to develop unexpected cultural relations (Cole, 2009: 1). This is reflected in Deleuze's understanding of the terms 'deterritorialisation' and 'reterritorialisation' that I will discuss in detail below. I will argue in this chapter that what is proper to affect is first and foremost what Cole understands as "undermining authoritarianism"; what Rancière identifies as a dissensus (in both Deleuze and Lyotard's work); what Deleuze himself calls a line of flight or deterritorialisation and what Lyotard in the previous chapter calls displacement or transgression.[6] In Deleuze deterritorialisation is not always followed by

[5] The term 'relation' implies a connection, and according to the OED it refers etymologically to "connection," "correspondence" as well as the "act of telling," "a bringing back," "restoring" and "proposition." The term is therefore (as I understand it) on the side of representation and the social. Therefore, affect as an encounter is deterritorialisation and affect as a relation is reterritorialisation. In other words, the relation relates to Deleuze's notion of affection in language that is only partly conscious (a confused idea) and as sensation in painting, again only partly conscious and a confused idea.

[6] In contrast other writers tend to emphasise affect's relational aspect. Rosi Braidotti and Patricia Pisters in *Revisiting Normativity with Deleuze* (2012), for instance, argue that affect "is the feeling of change in

reterritorialisation (which takes place in art or in language and is the recreation of the space opened up by deterritorialisation in new combinations and forms). Yet, he insists that in order to create art, the two terms must coincide. Thus, it is in the movement of reterritorialisation where the creation of new relations through affects and percepts takes place. Deleuze, insists on the simultaneous nature of these movements and understands both as affective movements, therefore removing altogether any power given to language. At the same time, he removes the tension produced between two differential forms of power (and the duality) and therefore places emphasis on affect's capacity to form new relations through reterritorialisation and representation that rehabilitates affect in language. I propose that if Deleuze places importance on the affective relation (on reterritorialisation or on representation), it is because without it there can be no creative function, no new art and no new understandings. For Lyotard, on the other hand, the displacement (transgression) of affect is enough to create anew (to transform). This difference is made visible in their individual discussions of art. Lyotard, on the one hand, privileges abstraction, that is, non-representational forms of art that are able to capture the affective register outside representation all together, while Deleuze, on the other hand, argues that we cannot avoid representation and therefore must extract or isolate affects and percepts through Figures (bodies that are capable of movement and change) from within representation. Both Deleuze and Lyotard however, critique the notion of representation and the understanding of language that emerges from the linguistic turn. This is not to say that Deleuze's emphasis on representation is an emphasis on language, since what we shall see in his account on art is that the figural enables him to discuss and develop representation as an affective endeavour and not a linguistic one. In what follows I will first be viewing how affect relates to literature in

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the relation of bodies entering a new assemblage […] Affect then is a resolution of a complex differential field, relating changes in relations among bodies." (Braidotti & Pisters, 2012: 32).

Deleuze's work and its involvement in "affective becomings." I will then turn to his understanding of art and painting in *The Logic of Sensation* and take a closer look at how he develops Lyotard's notion of the figural, as well as what differentiates the two writers.

I Literature and Affect

Art, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is a compound of sensation that captures, preserves and presents moments of intensity. They state that "Art preserves, and it is the only thing in the world that is preserved. […] What is preserved – the thing or the work of art – is *a bloc of sensations*, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 164). These intensities exist independently of language and are capable of changing thought and disturbing existing categorisation. Deleuze asserts that art is experienced as "sensation" and is something that is *felt* rather than comprehended (through interpretation). The revolutionary potential of art then lies in its ability to open up new ways of relating to or engaging with the world. Art functions, Deleuze and Guattari write, as a means for "thinking differently," by exposing the viewer or listener to an impersonal and differential flow that moves beyond "normal" perceptions and opinions (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 51). Deleuze and Guattari in *What is Philosophy?* view art as an exemplary model that encapsulates within its fabric the affective processes that give it life, that animate it, and make visible the underlying processes of *all* representation. Art here seeks to exceed and surpass its own limits, insofar as we understand these limitations as those of representation and language. In painting, these limits are overcome by rendering the invisible forces in an image visible, while in literature, Deleuze names this process "becoming minor," whereby "The limit is not outside language, it is the outside *of* language. It is made up

of visions and auditions that are not of language, but which language alone makes possible" (Deleuze, 1997: iv)[7].

While signification forms the structure of a work of art, that is, the visible dimension or 'surface', moments of intensity are the invisible elements operating *within* the work of art *and* at its very limits. For Deleuze (like Lyotard), affect exists independently to language, and even though it is viewed as autonomous in relation to signification, it is not merely outside of language but operates from within it and alongside it, as a different form of sense or expression that both assists and intervenes in the mechanisms of signification. Jean-Jacques Lecercle, in *Deleuze and Language*, addressing Deleuze's claim that "linguistics has done a lot of harm" and his rejection of the centrality of language, posits that "the reader is under the impression that Deleuze always seeks to ground language in something else (sometimes it is the body, sometimes it is thought), to treat it, if not as an epiphenomenon, at least as a secondary phenomenon" (Lecercle, 2002: 2). For Deleuze, language is indeed anterior to affect. In tackling the question of art, he is less concerned with asking the question of "what art means," which concerns interpretation, and more interested in investigating "how art functions," which rather involves experimentation. Hence, the question of 'how art functions' is a two-fold question, in that on the one hand it primarily concerns his understanding of affect and affect-events, but at the same time what must also be taken into account are contemporary linguistic theories. Although Deleuze does not treat literature any differently from other forms of art, contemporary linguistic theories

[7] This appears as a contradiction in Deleuze's work, since his theory of pure immanence posits that there can be no outside. I will be exploring this later on in this chapter as a consistently recurring contradiction in various settings in his work. However, it is worth considering how Massumi explains the problematic nature between inside and outside in Deleuze's work. He argues that "Although the realm of intensity that Deleuze's philosophy strives to conceptualise is transcendental in the sense that it is not directly accessible to experience, it is not transcendent, it is not exactly outside either. It is immanent to it – always in it but not of it" (Massumi, 2002: 33). In other words, for Massumi, unconscious affective experience is outside consciousness but is still a part of it and forms part of a process with it.

governed by ideas on meaning and interpretation become an added problem or obstacle.[8] As a result, the question then becomes: How does art function in relation to both affect *and* language? According to Deleuze and Guattari, in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*:

> No one has been able to pose the problem of language except to the extent that linguistics and logicians have eliminated meaning; and the *highest* power of language was discovered only when the *work* was viewed as a machine, producing certain effects, amenable to a certain use… The idea that meaning is nothing other than use becomes a principle only if we have at our disposal *immanent* criteria capable of determining legitimate uses (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983:108).

For Deleuze, the claim that meaning is use is only valid if we begin with elements that are in themselves devoid of any signification, despite their use. This question has been posed by modern literature as "the problem of a world in *fragments*," a chaotic world deprived of unity (Smith, 1997: xxii). And according to Deleuze and Guattari, it is only when objective contents and subjective forms have collapsed and give way to the chaotic and multiple world of fragments that a work of art assumes its full meaning. In short, all the different elements and parts of the literary machine must be viewed in their mutual independence as *pure singularities*, i.e. "a pure dispersed anarchic multiplicity without unity or totality, and whose elements are welded and pasted together by the real distinction or the very absence of a link" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 324). This is the principle of *difference* and is the first criterion by which art functions. Each fragment or part thereof is related to the other only through sheer difference, so the only thing which links the various fragments is that each of them is different. Difference here takes on a positive understanding and becomes a principle for both literature and life. However,

[8] As already mentioned, although Deleuze does not treat literature as if it were a lesser form of art than painting (for instance), there is a difference between literature and visual forms of art (like painting). Like Lyotard, he argues that literature cannot grasp the affect-event in any direct way. Writing can invoke affect, literature more so than theory for instance, but it cannot be captured in the same way as painting. Literature reveals and emphasises the problem of language (representation) and illustrates that representation involves what is signified and what escapes (or lies beneath) signification and that the two are involved in an interdependent relationship.

the problem that Deleuze and Guattari encounter with the notion of difference in the work of art is accounting for how these essentially non-communicative different parts establish a system of communication.

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari state that a literary work must be viewed as the unity of its parts, even though these parts remain essentially disjointed. If the literary work creates an illusion of totality, it is only as a peripheral totality that has been fabricated separately as a *new* singularity alongside its other parts and elements. Although the work constitutes a whole, it neither unifies nor totalises. However, it does have an effect on its parts, in that it is able to create *non-pre-existent* relations between fragments that in themselves remain disconnected. It is not that the *whole* is devoid of sense but rather that it is not composed of parts and is what prevents the fragments from both closing in on themselves and from extending into infinitely larger sets. In other words, the *whole* in Deleuze becomes the *open*, and it is what consistently produces the new. Art thus functions as a productive "machine" which creates multiplicities, since they argue that the "multiple must be made" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 7) By extracting and producing singularities, while placing them in continuous variation (so as to produce a variable whole), art has the power to create and continually invent new relations. These singularities are virtual, that is, they are not yet predicates or actual but rather constitute what Deleuze names pure "events." Daniel W. Smith notes on this subject that "Linguistically, they [events] are like indeterminate infinitives that are not yet actualised in determinate modes, tenses, persons, and voices" (Smith, 1997: xxv). In *The Logic of Sense* Deleuze argues that the domain of singularities, or what he names the "virtual," is anterior to predicates or the actual. Singularities constitute the genetic elements of not only individual life, but also the world in which they are actualised. To clarify, in Deleuze the virtual and the actual are both exclusive and yet collaborative

dimensions of the real. The actual-real defines bodies, states of affairs, individuals and bodily mixtures. And the virtual-real describes singularities or incorporeal events on a plane of consistency that belong to the "pure past," that is the past which can never be fully present. While the virtual has the capacity to bring about actualisations, it can never coincide or be identified with its actualisation. Hence, multiplicity here is not defined by its centre but rather by its limits and borders. It enters into relations with other multiplicities and transforms both itself and even nature by following *a line of flight,* or deterritorialisation. And the self is understood as the threshold of becoming between two multiplicities. In other words, affect-events function in the work of art in the same way as that which disturbs any fixed relations and fixed meanings created by signification. This is precisely why Deleuze argues that affect-events, or moments of intensity, exist and operate independently from language.

Much of Deleuze's criticism of linguistics is directed at a particular understanding, which he argues assumes language to be like a simple machine, much like an incline – a system of equilibrium whose variations only arise in expression. This is what Deleuze and Guattari name the "imperialism of the signifier." In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they claim "This terminological discussion would be entirely without interest if it did not bring us to another danger: not the imperialism of language affecting all the strata, but the imperialism of the signifier affecting language itself […](Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 73). Dorothea Olkowski, in the meantime, contends that "Much of Deleuze's critique of linguistics is directed towards the imperialism of the signifier. […] It is against this notion of the signifier as a representation transcending that which it represents that Deleuze will propose a logic of sense" (Olkowski, 2008: 104). Deleuze critiques the understanding of language that views the signifier as a representation that transcends artwork or literary work. At the beginning of *The Logic of Sense* Deleuze

argues that “Valéry had a profound idea: what is most deep is the skin” (Deleuze, 2004:12), an idea which he takes from Valéry’s *Idée fixe* (1965), although he does not offer a citation. He posits that any philosophy of depth will inevitably be wounded by Valéry’s intuition, for “The more events traverse the entire, depthless extension […] the more they affect bodies which they cut and bruise” (Deleuze, 2004: 12). Affect, he continues, produces in the current of language a kind of “foot stomping, a stammering,” akin to a repetition “that never ceases to create something new” (Deleuze, 1997: 98). Under the impulse of affect, language is set whirling and forms a language of the future, as if it were a foreign language, an eternal reiteration, albeit “one that leaps and jumps” (Deleuze, 1997: 98). Between the old language and the present language that is being affected (as well as the new one being formed), there are intervals and empty spaces, but these are filled with “immense visions,” insane scenes and landscapes. Language as such does not have signs at its disposal but rather acquires them by creating them. This is when “language has become Sign, poetry, and one can no longer distinguish between language, speech, or word” (Deleuze, 1997: 98). However, a language cannot produce a new or ‘minor’ language without language (as a whole) being taken to its limit. According to Deleuze “The limit of language is the Thing in its muteness – vision” (Deleuze, 1997: 98). The affective “Thing” is the limit of language, but the sign is the language (trace) of the thing. As such a language, when hollowed out, completes its aim and becomes a Sign that shows the Thing. In short, like Lyotard, he argues that in language an affect can be found as a trace, while it can only invoke affect rather than capture it. Both writers pursue the notion that writing itself is a tracing of affects. Every sign is affective as well as linguistic. Writing thus creates auditions (affects) and visions (percepts) by making signification twist and turn, taking it to its very limits.

Deleuze elaborates on the relationship between language and affect through the notion of voice. In *Essays Critical and Clinical* he argues that language names the possible, while voices are waves or flows that direct and distribute the linguistic "corpuscles." This is what he understands as the trace of affect within language, in that this voice is that of "becoming" and the line of flight. He also argues that the path or line of flight is an open road, a "long life travel into the unknown" whose goal is merely the process of the journey. Or, as Roland Bogue puts it, "The open road is selfless yet anamorphous, purified of both merging and of self and its mode of relation is that of sympathy, a feeling that includes within it the sympathies of love and hate – in short, a general affectivity that pervades a process of open ended movement" (Bogue, 2003: 153). The line of flight opened up by the affective voice within language is viewed as the activity of writing. He states that "to flee is to trace a line, lines, an entire cartography," and elsewhere that "To write is to trace lines of flight" (Deleuze, 2007: 43). Deleuze, therefore, does not simply dismiss language but presents a view thereof which participates in the creation of new affects and percepts and is inseparable from the process of becoming. He claims that "writing is inseparable from becoming […] To become is not to attain a form (identification, imitation, Mimesis) but to find the zone of proximity, indescernibility, or indifferentiation…" (Deleuze, 1997: 1), and for him the formation of identity and subjectivity is understood in terms of mimesis, imitation and identification. He goes on to propose a theory of "becoming" that is aligned with and participates in the creation of the new, thereby replacing the prevailing linguistic theories of identity-formation through linguistically constructed and ideologically produced subjectivities. Deleuze breaks with the representational understanding of language and suggests that the relationship between creating or producing artwork and becoming relates to the question of how affect-events function in literature. Affects in

literature are viewed from the standpoint of the becomings that seize them. Since to become is never to imitate, or to be like, or to do like, nor is it to conform to a model in Deleuze, this linguistic theory of representation is rejected in terms of understanding the relationship between art and becoming.

In *A Thousand Plateaus,* Deleuze and Guattari argue that "Pure affects imply an enterprise of desubjectification" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 297). The individual, according to them, is a multiplicity; it is the actualisation of a set of virtual singularities that function together, that enter into a relation of symbiosis in order to attain some consistency. In other words, each individual is open to the infinity of singularities through which it passes, while at the same time it loses its centre, that is, its identity, both as the self and as a concept. However, there is a vast difference between the virtual singularities which define the plane of immanence and the individuals which actualise them but also transform them into something transcendent. For instance, a wound on the body may be actualised in the lived experience of an individual, but the wound in itself remains a pure virtuality on the plane of immanence. The individual, then, is capable of transcending its form and its syntactical link with the world, so as to attain the universal communication of events. This is what Deleuze describes as the process of *schizophrenization*. In *The Logic of Sense* he claims "For the schizophrenic then, it is less a question of recovering meaning than of destroying the word, of conjuring up the affect, and of transforming the painful passion of the body into a triumphant action, obedience into command, always in the depth beneath the fissured surface" (Deleuze; 2004, 100). Here, once again, we encounter this contradiction between surface and depth in Deleuze's work. But more than that, he points out here, that the affect is manifested as "the painful passion of the body" that is transformed "into a triumphant action". He thereby indicates that affect is first and foremost, a "painful" encounter (a

dissensus or a deterritorialisation) followed by a (pleasurable/triumphant action) reterritorialisation. Therefore, implying that there is a break between the two movements. Within this process, the individual's identity dissolves and passes fully into the "virtual chaosmos" of incorporated disjunction: "this surface nonsense which traverses the divergent […] forms a 'chaosmos' and no longer a world; the aleatory point which traverses them forms a counter-self, and no longer a self […]" (Deleuze, 2004: 201). Hence, the schizophrenic transfers very quickly from one singularity to another, where events are never explained in the same manner, do not invoke the same genealogy and, moreover, never attain the same identity. The schizophrenic, then, remains within the domain of the virtual and the possible. According to Deleuze, therefore, the self is not defined by its identity but by a process of "becoming." The process of becoming in Deleuze does not just refer to the fact that the self is not a static being, or that it is constantly in flux; rather, becoming involves a becoming of two multiplicities, where the self is the threshold. What this means is that, in becoming, one entity does not become another, but instead each entity encounters the other and the becoming remains *between* the two and *outside* the two. In fact, this becoming is what Deleuze describes as the affect-event, the "pure affect," or the percept. He contends that literature's task is not to shape or form subjects and subjectivities but rather to reinforce the displacement of becomings into affects and percepts which are coalesced into blocks of sensation through virtual amalgamation. These are what Deleuze and Guattari name *assemblages*: non-subjectified affects and percepts and are linked to their understanding of "the language of literature" or the "art of writing."

According to Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the assemblage can be defined as a *multiplicity*:

> A book is an assemblage of this kind, and as such is unattributable. It is a multiplicity – but we don't know what the multiple entails when it is not longer attributed […] One

> side of a mechanic assemblage faces the strata, which doubtless make it a kind of organism, or signifying totality, or determination attributable to a subject; it also has a side facing *a body without organs*, which is continually dismantling the organism, causing asignifying particles or pure intensities to pass or circulate, and attributing to itself subjects that it leaves with nothing more than a name as the trace of an intensity (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 4).

Assemblages are sites where forces compete and coalesce, increase and multiply, without privileging any one language, game or genre. The one side of a mechanic assemblage faces towards "the strata," which Deleuze reinterprets in his reading of Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) in his book *Foucault (1988)* as "historical formations, positivities or empiricities. As 'sedimentary beds' they are made from things and words, from seeing and speaking, from the visible and the sayable, from bands of visibility and fields of readability, from contents and expression" (Deleuze, 1988: 47). The stratum for Deleuze is the history of ideas, of knowledge and of thought or of science, constituted by the visible on the one hand and what is sayable on the other. The strata, however, are formed by a double articulation, namely the simultaneous articulation of content (the signifying elements of a representation) and expression (the non-signifying elements of a representation). It must be noted that for Deleuze both expression and content have their own substance and form whereby the first refers to the way 'matters' are transformed by getting caught up in the dynamics of "difference engines," while the latter refers to the way these structured 'matters' are organised in the assemblage. If the mechanic assemblage has one side turned towards the strata, the other side faces the "body without organs" that continually dismantles the strata. The body without organs is the force of affect and is described as an unconsciously desiring body – a notion to which I will return in further detail below when I discuss *The Logic of Sensation*, since it is significant to his understanding of affect and images in artworks. According to Deleuze, "The utterance is the product of an assemblage – which is always collective, which brings into play within us and

outside us populations, multiplicities, territories, becomings, affects, events" (Deleuze and Parnet, 2007: 51), while according to Lecercle, Deleuze's understanding of language is "a concept of language immersed in the world of things, intervening among them, forming machines with them, capturing and distributing intensities, being itself a part of the general movement of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation" (Lecercle, 2002: 25-26). Thus, literature – like painting and other forms of art, but also language itself – is viewed as an assemblage, which appears to be the meeting point between representation and intensity, between the visible and invisible; fundamentally, every assemblage is heterogeneous, and for him, even the face is viewed as an assemblage. To form assemblages is "to be in the middle, on the line of an encounter of an interior world and an exterior world" (Deleuze, 2007: 66). For Deleuze, this middle or in-between world is the place of the image. In the following section I will be looking at how the image in Deleuze (like Lyotard) is redefined and constituted as primarily affective, and its signifying properties are only secondary. In order to explain this I turn to his concept of faciality. The image, as we shall see, is what negotiates between linguistic and non-linguistic elements. While it is the latter (affects and percepts) that are proper to it, the former is what constitutes its surface.

The face, as stated by Deleuze and Guattari, is the product of "faciality," the machine that combines the forces of white walls and black holes defined by two axes: signifiance (white wall) and subjectivation (black hole). The white wall and the black hole, which imply surface and depth, respectively, can be seen perhaps as a contradiction in their work, since they argue that their work is characterised as a philosophy of pure immanence:

> If human beings have a destiny, it is rather to escape the face, to dismantle the face and facialisations, to become imperceptible, to become clandestine, not by returning to animality, nor even by returning to the head, but by spiritual and special becomings-

> animal, by strange and true becomings that get past the wall and get out of the black holes (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 171).

The face-landscape, consisting of the two axes of signifiance and subjectivation, is what art (painting particularly) seeks to escape and dismantle, while painting "has never ceased to have as its goal the deterritorialisation of faces and landscapes, either through the reactivation of corporeality, or through the liberation of lines and colours, or both at the same time" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 370). The authors note that in *The Logic of Sensation* Bacon's heads are probe heads in this sense, lines of escape from the face and faciality. However, this is not to say that they are a return to a primitive type of pre-faciality; instead, they are an escape that takes place from within the terrain of the face itself, a deformation (or stammering) from within, if you will. Probe-heads need not be pictures of heads, as they are instead any device that disrupts faciality. A probe-head, then, is that which explores the terrain beyond the face and is in this sense a move into chaos. Deleuze and Guattari posit that probe-heads are those mechanisms "that dismantle the strata in their wake, break through walls of signifiance, pour out of the holes of subjectivity, fell trees in favour of veritable rhizomes, and steer the flows down lines of positive deterritorialisation or creative flight" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 190) Probe-heads are therefore not only destructive but also creative and productive of other, more fluid, modes of organisation. As such, they suggest that "Beyond the face lies an altogether different inhumanity: no longer that of the primitive head, but of 'probe-heads'; here, cutting edges of deterritorialisation become operative and lines of deterritorialisation positive and absolute, forming strange new becomings" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 190-1). The de-facialising tendency of every line of flight refers not only to Bacon's probe-heads but to any form of art that involves itself in experimentation and which creates within unfamiliar territories. They do not emerge

from these unfamiliar faces (they reterritorialise rather in the unfamiliar) but from the very same substances that come from faces. According to Deleuze, a probe-head is intensive "a feeling, a pure Power that passes through an entire series of qualities, each of them assuming a momentary independence, but then crossing a threshold that emerges onto a new quality" (Smith, 1997: xxxii) Bacon's probe-heads are a deterritorialisation of the face towards a "becoming-animal," in that they are affective and the place where the human becomes non-human. Deleuze and Guatarri state in *What is Philosophy?* that "*Affects are precisely these nonhuman becomings of man*, just as percepts – including the town – are *nonhuman landscapes of nature*" (Deleuze and Guatarri, 1994: 169). According to Deleuze and Guattari, we are not in the world but rather "we become *with* the world" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 169). They go on to state that "Everything is vision, becoming. We become universes" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 169). The notion of vision and the image is significant in relation to Deleuze's conceptualisation of affect and is re-conceptualised in terms of affective difference. The image (and the visual) is, for Deleuze, aligned with affect, and the images that interest him, as we shall see, are snapshots of affective difference prior to consciousness and language.

Deleuze argues that an image does not participate in signification, because when it enters language it enters as an outsider. The distinction made between signification and image and the privileging of the image as being on the side of affect aligns Deleuze with the other two writers discussed in my thesis. In a chapter called 'The Exhausted', in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, he defines the images as follows:

> The image is not defined by the sublimity of its content but by its form, that is, by its 'internal tension', or by the force it mobilizes to create a void or to bore holes, to loosen the grip of words, to dry up the oozing of voices, so as to free from memory and reason: a small, alogical, amnesiac, and almost aphasic image, sometimes standing in the void, sometimes shivering in the open. The image is not an object but a 'process' (Deleuze, 1997: 159).

In much the same way as Lyotard, Deleuze views the image as distinct from signification, or what Lacan names the 'Symbolic', and instead argues that the image is split between its content and its form (which is the carrier of an 'internal tension' or difference). Significantly, if the image is a process it is because it lies and negotiates *between* form and content. Deleuze suggests that images participate in language as a different form of *expression* "which is no longer a language of names or voices, but a language of images, resounding and colouring images" (Deleuze, 1997: 159). Moreover, images, whether aural or visual, are freed from the chains of language, and he posits that what he finds tedious in "the language of words is the way in which it is burdened with calculations, memories, and stories: it cannot avoid them" (Deleuze, 1997: 159). Here, literature and other discursive practices which are creative and inventive are excluded from Deleuze's criticism; rather, "writers, as Proust says, invent a new language within language, a foreign language, as it were. […] Beckett spoke of 'drilling holes' in language in order to see or hear 'what was lurking behind'. One must say of every writer: he is a seer, a hearer, 'ill seen ill said', she is a colorist, a musician" (Deleuze, 1997: Iv). as such, the language of literature is distinguished from the language of words.[9]

The language of literature is composed of sonorous images which deform the "language of words," which is why Deleuze and Guattari pursue the idea in *What is Philosophy?* that art is the language of sensations, not the "language of words." They claim:

> Whether through words, colours, sounds, or stone, art is the language of sensations. Art does not have opinions. Art undoes the triple organization of perceptions, affections and opinions in order to substitute a monument composed of percepts, affects and blocs of

[9] Here, we can make a distinction between literature and theory. Literature is capable of creating images that invoke affect, whereas theory is far more restricted, in that it must adhere to the rules and regulations of language more strictly and it must interpret and signify clearly through conceptual thought. However, it seems to me to also be a contradiction, since he seems to be giving language the power that he seeks to remove from it.

> sensations that take the place of language. The writer uses words, but by creating a syntax that makes them pass into sensation that makes the standard language stammer, tremble, cry or even sing: this the style, the 'tone', the language of sensations, or the foreign language within language that summons a people to come […] (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 176).

This is what Deleuze and Guattari call, in *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, a minor literature, a "foreign language in language," the concept of minor literature involves the foregrounding of affective and intensive qualities in language and functions as an a-signifying register, while minor literature makes the major stutter and stammer. By breaking with the operation of "order words" or signification, minor literature ensures that the major is stopped from making any 'sense'. The difference between these two literary elements, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is that "the major and minor mode are two different treatments of language, one of which consists in extracting constants from it, the other in placing it in continuous variation" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 118). Minor literature operates on an intensive register, in that it foregrounds the intensive aspects of language and counteracts the operation of order words by putting them into contact with other forces. In addition, its operation within the major forces the latter to stutter and stammer and produce the affect-event. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the process of becoming 'minor' describes the effect that literature has on language. Following Proust, they assert that great literature opens up a type of foreign language within language, which is not understood as a different language or even a marginalised language; rather, it is the "becoming minor" of language itself. They also state that the terms 'major' and 'minor' are two different treatments, or uses even, of the same language, as opposed to two different languages. In other words, they are two functions of the same language. What, then, is a "minor literature"? It refers to the revolutionary conditions and revolutionary possibilities of every form of literature, so it operates in such a way that it offers a means by which to think beyond "what makes

sense" and even beyond what is understood as human, which is a habitual mode of being or representational mode. Hence, the power of minor literature (what Lyotard names 'discourse' and Kristeva 'poetic language') lies in its ability to invoke affect (affective images), and affect incites readers (speakers) and major languages to move and change continually, thereby enabling the becoming of both.

In literature, this is what Deleuze in *The Logic of Sense* names the *schizophrenia of language* and describes as "The moment that the maternal language is stripped of its sense, its *phonetic elements* become singularly wounding" (Deleuze, 2004: 100). Meaning and interpretation here are understood to reside at the surface. The schizophrenic nature of language describes the collapse of the surface and as a result of meaning and interpretation also "In this collapse of the surface, the entire world loses its meaning" (Deleuze, 2004: 100)[10]. More significantly, Deleuze states that what defines this second, or foreign, language and this method of action, practically, "is its consonantal, guttural and aspirated overloads, its apostrophes and internal accents, its breaths and its scansions, and its modulation which replaces all syllabic or even literal values" (Deleuze, 2004: 101). According to the author, however, language is constituted not only by words as signifiers and grammar as structure, visible at its surface, but also the task of making a language stutter is a question of transforming the word into an action by rendering it unable to decompose and to disintegrate. In this way it becomes "*language without articulation*" (Deleuze, 2004: 102). As we have seen in a number of writers, including Lyotard, affect establishes a mode of communication without language. Despite their different sources of influence, in both Spinoza and Freud affect implies a type of (judgment) meaningful but minimal form of communication that

[10] Deleuze appears to be contradicting himself once more with a metaphor of surface and depth just as in his notion of faciality and the concept of the face that he argues is constituted by the white wall (surface) and the black hole (depth) and similar to his treatment of inside and outside at the beginning of this chapter regarding affect and language.

disturbs the body-soul or anima (an unconscious awareness that escapes conscious thought). He argues in *The Logic of Sense* that the "schizophrenic word" is comprised of a duality: the passion-word, which bursts into "wounding" *phonetic values*, and the action word, which fuses inarticulate *tonic values*. These two words are developed in Deleuze alongside and in relation to the duality of the body, that is, the *fragmented body* (of language) on the one hand and *the body without organs* (affective body of desire) on the other. They also refer to two types of nonsense, the one passive and the other active. The former points towards the word which is devoid of sense and is decomposed into phonetic elements or fragments, while the latter is related to the nonsense of tonic elements that shape a word which is incapable of being decomposed but is no less devoid of any sense. For Deleuze, the schizophrenia of language is its primary order, and in this order what remains is the duality between the actions and the passions of the body. He claims that "Language is both at once, being entirely reabsorbed into the gaping depth. […] Not only is there no longer any sense, but there is no longer any grammar or syntax either" (Deleuze, 2004: 103). What becoming minor in the activity of writing entails, then, is the breaking down of a chain (or a series) of deductions that make language stutter and in doing so creates a (an impersonal) *style* in which "signs and concepts vanish, and things begin to write themselves and for themselves, as they leap across the intervals" (Deleuze, 1997: 150). The act of writing is impersonal, for in *Proust and Signs* Deleuze claims that "Style is not the man, style is essence itself" (Deleuze, 2000: 48). Becoming minor therefore involves an impersonal voice or style that makes language "stutter" and operates to extract visions and auditions from within language, in order to incite new affects and new percepts. This entails the creation of models (as opposed to metaphors).

Whereas Lyotard argues that literature is capable of illustrating (painting a picture through words) by creating metaphors and therefore evoking figural images (figure-forms), Deleuze rejects the notion of the metaphor. He argues that "It is never a matter of metaphors, there are no metaphors, only combinations" (Deleuze and Parnet, 2007: 117), and he proposes instead a notion of "metamorphosis." His objection to the metaphor is based on several different factors. First, a metaphor is based on an understanding of difference that postulates a distance between the tenor (voice/expression) and vehicle (signification). For Deleuze these rather must coincide immediately. The separation involved in this difference renders the 'literal' meaning as true (a rose is a rose, is a rose) by definition and the metaphoric relation as false. Therefore, the metaphorical sign is viewed as a false sign that is separated from a literal sign that picks out the referent. Second, a metaphor involves replacement, which results in transformation rather than deformation. The invoked tenor of the metaphor is thus doubly absent and is replaced by a true sign. Third, the metaphor involves a hierarchy, since literal meaning, insofar as it is true, is more valuable than metaphoric meaning. Fourth, a metaphor involves abstraction and generalisation. If Deleuze's aversion to metaphors is paradoxical, it is because his own writing is laden with them; however, he insists that he does not use metaphors and his engagement with scientific and mathematical models is an engagement with models, not metaphors. He also contends that while metaphors result in the transformation of the Figure and are therefore transcendent, metamorphosis (the creation of combinations/models) results in deformation and thus remains immanent. Deleuze and Guattari argue in *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* that we must "kill the metaphor," for it "kills the thing" by not showing it directly (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986: 70). Metamorphosis is instead a hyper-reality and also a kind of hyper-literalness, and it is what allows Deleuze to develop the

concept of "becoming-animal". They state that the appearance of investigative dogs or singing mice in Kafka's stories have nothing metaphorical about them; rather, Kafka reveals in this way our essential complicity with our own bodies, i.e. "the animal or the meat" (Hughes, 2012: 35). It is a non-comparable semblance. In other words, it does not compare one thing to another, but rather, is something new in itself. The Body without Organs for instance is in fact treated as a model and not a metaphor for desire, precisely because it not a concept but an image (a picture) or a description that illustrates difference (as opposed to likeness) by departing from previous notions of desire. The model is therefore a more direct way of indicating (difference).

According to Deleuze, a metaphor can too easily be understood as a mere ornament of figuration, an arbitrary comparison and therefore a generalisation. It results in the transcendence of the figure, since it entails a separation that creates a distinction between inside and outside. The metaphor of inside and outside promises a breakthrough – or release (this is its seduction), though for Deleuze there is no strict line separating the inside and outside, since there are only folds. Deleuze argues that "The outside is not a fixed limit but a moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than outside, but precisely the inside of the outside" (Deleuze, 1988: 80). The fold is a relative position within an endlessly pleated surface in Life. It is what denotes a becoming. However, whereas binaries such as inside and outside operate within an either/or logic, that is, one or the other, the fold allows both this *and* that. This is not to say that there are no tears on the surface of things. There is a difference between what is said and what is felt, and it marks a wound at the surface; nevertheless, the two are intimately related and are rarely opposed, since they are different "unfoldings" of one and the same sensation that operate on different planes. The problem with the notion of

the metaphor in Deleuze's view is that it allows us to dismiss the figure as a mere ornament, without acknowledging the real distribution that the metaphor accomplishes. The event, he argues, rather happens within and through the figure; it does not transcend. The image created "is that which exhausts itself, consumes itself […] it is a question not of realising the impossible but of exhausting the possible" (Deleuze, 1997: 171). What Deleuze names "exhausting the possible" is the process of exhausting language and possibilities, in order to reach its limits, by giving it a maximal extension that allows it to be treated as real, in the manner of Kafka. However, if the image is reduced to abstraction (nothingness), as in the case of Lyotard, the result is "a night without sleep." The image in metamorphosis is understood as projecting an inner image onto the outside world, and this is to double the image with 'abstract entities', to infuse it with invisible or affective forces that are capable of disturbing language and making it 'other'.

Deleuze reconfigures the notion of the metaphor by instigating two possible paths that an image can take to escape language. He argues that it is a matter of "making the image" rather than finding it (Deleuze, 1997: 171). If Deleuze is interested in the metaphor, it is only because of the transfer that it accomplishes; the way in which it performs real distribution across a field of intensity. However, it results in an abstraction that has to be recuperated once again in language and therefore cannot point to the thing itself. Deleuze seeks to redefine the metaphor, to show that his encounter with it has deformed it into something different, something new. Literature incites visions which "are not fantasies, but veritable ideas" (Deleuze, 1997: 5), though, and he maintains that these are also wrested from the real and have a life of their own.[11] In his

[11] According to Deleuze, "the Idea is not yet a concept of an object which submits the world to the requirements of representation, but rather a brute presence which can be invoked in the world only in the function of that which is not 'representable' in things" (Deleuze, 2001: 59). Hence, Ideas are neither a

definition of Deleuze's concept of "becoming," Stagoll writes "every event is but a unique instant of production in a continual flow of changes evident in the cosmos. The only thing 'shared' by events is their having become different in the course of their production" (Stagoll, 2005: 22). In the *Logic of Sensation* Deleuze argues that painting captures the processes of the image, its difference which is its force (desire). A genuine event, he maintains, does not happen to someone but in and through someone (which makes him or her part of the event), and "what I call ideas are images that make one think" (Deleuze, 2007: 210) These are force relations that are expressed as sensation. In painting, Deleuze names this infiltration from *within* the figural, which, in *The Logic of Sensation*, emerges as the sonorous image by which representation and the "order of words" are displaced. Here, we must clarify Deleuze's understanding of art and affect by taking a closer look at *The Logic of Sensation*. As already mentioned, in this book he adopts the notion of the figural from Lyotard and develops it through engagement with Francis Bacon's paintings. In this discussion we will begin to see more clearly his differences in relation to Lyotard. But first, what does Deleuze understand by art? He addresses this question as well as differentiating between art forms with Guattari in *What is Philosophy?*

II Art and Affect

According to Deleuze and Guattari, the artwork is a "bloc of sensation" that captures the bodily sensation of the artist and preserves it in its fabric as a trace: "We paint, sculpt, compose, and write with sensations. We paint, sculpt, compose, and write sensations" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 166). They argue that art is "a being of sensation and nothing else; it exists in itself" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 164). Art for

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concept nor a property of individual consciousness but a non-representational presence. I therefore link it with his notion of affection.

Deleuze (as for Lyotard) exists independently of its creator, its audience and the tools and materials (including language) that are used to create it. The "percept" or pure affect is an "autonomous being" defined as a set of qualities in a "pure" state, outside their "actual" conditions, outside their spatio-temporal coordinates, with their own singularities and virtual conjunctions. Deleuze understands them as pure "possibilities" or singular qualities or powers that have no relation to a subject. Although they remain virtual possibilities or singularities in the category of the real, these singular qualities become forces in relation to each other (action-reaction, exertion-resistance etc.), and they are eventually actualised in determinate space and time, historically, geographically and through individual people. However, art does not actualise these virtual affects but rather it gives them "a body, a life, a universe" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 177). Art houses these invisible forces and provides them with a space or body to *become* visible. For the authors art is created through sensations and is experienced as sensation. And though they do not privilege one form of art over another, they distinguish between the act of seeing (image) and the act of writing (through language), and correspondingly visual art from literature, in how they use language. In *What is Philosophy?* they argue that a picture of a young man will smile on the canvas for as long as the canvas lasts. There are images that illustrate gestures that are beyond representation and language: blood throbbing under the skin of a woman's face, the wind that shakes a branch or a group of young men preparing to leave. These are all examples (or snapshots) of passion captured in movement.[12] Painting is capable of capturing a figural gesture, a 'this' that is always unique and yet always remains the same: "The young girl maintains the pose that she has had for five thousand years, a gesture that no longer depends on whoever made it" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 163).

[12] This is very similar to how Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida* (1980) describes the punctum in the photographic image.

In contrast, they posit that in a novel, the young man will stop smiling and will start to smile again when we turn to this page or that moment. Language cannot capture affects or percepts without changing them *and* changing with them. However, it is the painter who "brings before us, in front of a fixed canvas" not a resemblance but the pure sensation of a "tortured flower" of a "landscape that has been slashed, pressed and plowed," preserving "*the eternity that coexists with this short duration*" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 166). It is true, they suggest, that the work of art is a monument. The monument, however, is not something commemorating the past but a bloc of sensations that provide the event with the compound that celebrates it. In other words, the artwork is not only constituted by affects and percepts but it 'thinks' in affects and percepts and also reveals their underlying processes. I will now take a closer look at Deleuze's discussion of the figural in *The Logic of Sensation*.

Deleuze addresses the problem of representation in art and art practices through the notion of the figural and the paintings of Francis Bacon. In *The Logic of Sensation* the figural is what captures and preserves affect-events from within a space that at first sight appears to be dominated by the figurative (language/representation). He uses the 'term' 'figural' in the same way as Lyotard in *Discourse, Figure*, namely as a substantive in order to oppose the 'figurative' (representation). He reconfigures the notion of the image as a modality that takes the side of the figural, claiming:

> Painting has neither a model to represent nor a story to narrate. It thus has two possible ways of escaping the figurative: toward pure form, through abstraction; or toward the purely figural, through extraction or isolation. If the painter keeps to the Figure, if he or she opts for the second path, it will be to oppose the figural to the figurative (Deleuze, 2005: 2).

What Deleuze illustrates is that he privileges works of art that do not take the path of abstraction but instead oppose the figural to the figurative (by sticking to the Figure). Hence, in contrast to Lyotard, who privileges abstraction as what escapes the figurative,

Deleuze argues instead that it is the process of isolation or extraction that renders visible the process of the figural. He maintains further that once the Figure is isolated "the Figure becomes an Image, an Icon" (Deleuze, 2005: 2). The technique of isolating the figure against a background is, in his view, "more direct and more sensible" than abstraction (Deleuze, 2005: 8). The delimiting outline dividing the Figure and the background is similar to what Lyotard names the 'figure-image' or what Deleuze calls the 'percept'. Both, regard human perception beyond the limits of what can be heard, seen or understood, while Pearson suggests that Deleuze understands human perception as a "subtraction" or "contraction" of the real and uses his philosophy of perception to respond to the "insufficiency of the faculties of perception, as a means to address reality or things which do not explicitly strike our sense or consciousness" (Pearson, 1999: 418). In *The Logic of Sense* as well as *What is Philosophy?* intensity is used to explain elements at the limits of perception: percepts or "pure affects." These are pure differences or "qualitative differences," in that they are pure possibilities that give rise to perceived entities. Deleuze and Guattari assert that "The being of sensation, the bloc of percept and affect, will appear as the unity or reversibility of feeling and felt, their intimate intermingling like hands clasped together: it is the *flesh* that at the same time, is freed from the lived body, the perceived world" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 178). As qualities of pure difference, intensities are virtual although they are nonetheless real, and while they cannot be perceived directly, they can be felt, sensed or perceived in the 'quality' they give rise to. This is why sticking to the Figure – capturing it mid-movement – opposes the rigid forms of structure and representation and illustrates that what lies beneath the figurative is the figural, which, Deleuze claims, frees the flesh from the lived body and experience.

Deleuze's distanciation from abstraction designates another difference between himself and Lyotard in the way that they view photography and painting. By denouncing figurative elements in painting in favour of abstraction, Lyotard asserts both the aesthetic and philosophical superiority of abstract painting over photography.[13] Deleuze argues that although the photograph is instantaneous, it does not have as its ambition to represent, illustrate or narrate, and the photographic representation is in fact that which makes us question the nature of seeing and the problem of reproduction and representation in images – a question that preoccupies much of *Discourse, Figure* and directs Lyotard's discussion of art. For Deleuze, however, it is photography that problematises the order of the visual and how we understand the activity of 'seeing', as it reveals that the *way* "modern man sees" is dangerous – and not simply because it is figurative, but because this way of seeing claims to reign over vision and thus reign over painting. According to Deleuze, modern painting, whether abstract or figurative, is always/already invaded and besieged by photographs and images that are clichés, "that are already lodged on the canvas before the painter begins to work. It would be a mistake to think that the painter works on a white and virgin surface. The entire surface is already invested virtually with all kinds of clichés, which the painter will have to break with" (Deleuze, 2005: 8). Deleuze, like Lyotard, appeals to the sovereignty of the image and its distinction from representation or language. However, he argues that only through the process of isolation or extraction of the Figure can sensation be transmitted directly to the flesh. I will come back to this point further down when I address

[13] In *The Inhuman*, Lyotard questions the genuine identity and true originality of photography by comparing pictorial representation to photographic representation. He argues "One click, an ordinary citizen, whether amateur or tourist, can organise his or her identifying spaces and make a picture that enriches the cultural memory-bank. […] Thanks to optical, chemical, mechanical, and electronic refinements, the photographic machine makes certain of the skills, experience and training that were required of the apprentice painter (such as eradicating bad habits, educating the eye, hand, body, and soul, in order to elevate them to a new order) available to the amateur" (Lyotard, 1991: 120). What photography omits is the sensible quality emanating from the artist's body (the imperfections and details) that painting is capable of capturing. This view of photography and its relationship to representation and sensation is problematic for Deleuze.

Deleuze's discussion of Bacon's "painting the scream before the horror," where he argues that painting the scream removes the spectacle and therefore the narrative of the horror, and what we are left with are the pure forces of sensation. But first I would like to turn to what he means by the "process of isolation" or extraction that explains one part of this process or procedure.

Deleuze seeks to illustrate how a static object (a Figure) represented in a painting can become something more than an illustrative image and offer an affective sensation that extends beyond itself, flowing towards the viewer, enacting the event of the aesthetic encounter. By bringing forth the concept of the Figure, Deleuze ruptures the problem of figuration, thus enabling him to theorise the violent and sensuous content of the aesthetic encounter with Bacon's painting.[14] Isolation, or extraction, is the technique of isolating the Figure in a round area inside the painting, in order to liberate it from representation. Deleuze explains this through the concept of the "abstract machine of faciality": an apparatus used to determine the face of a person and its individual differences as aberrations from the normal face. But more than that the machine of faciality is the pre-condition of all faces, all acts of recognition. Hence, the face as seen previously is set against the head in particular in relation to what he calls here the "probe-head." In order to evade the operations of this mechanism (faciality), the artist constructs a *probe-head*, which is "a zooming in" (or close up that renders the face unknown and relieves the body from the faciality machine's organisation. In reference to Bacon's probe-heads, Deleuze argues that the face close-up becomes an autonomous entity. The close-up (whether in painting, photography or cinema) is the undoing of the face's organisation and works to expose its own material traits or qualities, "parts which are hard and tender, shadowy and illuminated, jagged and

[14] Deleuze's capitalisation of the "F" in Figure in *The Logic of Sensation* is meant to differentiate between his and Bacon's use of the figure and a representational figurative approach to painting.

curved, dull and shiny, smooth and grainy" (Deleuze, 2005b: 106). The figural here is the force that in rupturing the figurative turns the organic body (or the fragmented body) into a "body without organs," and this body, according to Deleuze, is only flesh. This is how he distinguishes between the figure (that transforms) and (becomes) the Figure with a capital "F."

The Figure is understood as a de-subjectivated body which is defined by its relations and not by its linguistically-created or "fabricated" subject-identity.[15] The body for Deleuze is unique, in that no two bodies can be constituted by exactly the same relations. And sensation resides in the body as that which liberates it from the stabilising mechanisms of representation. According to Deleuze:

> The figurative (representation) implies the relationship of an image to an object that it is supposed to illustrate; but it also implies the relationship of an image to other images in a composite whole which assigns a specific object to each of them. Narration is the correlate of illustration. A story always slips into, or tends to slip into, the space between two figures in order to animate the illustrated whole. Isolation is thus the simplest means, necessary though not sufficient, to break with representation, to disrupt narration, to escape illustration, to liberate the Figure: to stick to the fact (Deleuze, 2005: 2).

The *figural*, then, is what does violence to representation or the *figurative*. Representation in Deleuze, however, refers not only to a type of art involved in mimetic processes, but also to the way we are typically represented and represent ourselves (in the world). In other words, representation is ostensibly responsible for forming identity; it is the very means by which we constitute ourselves as subjects and organisms in the world. Deleuze states "If representation is related to an object, this relation is derived

[15] Deleuze's understanding of the body is in part taken from Spinoza, who argues that "by body we understand any quantity, with length, breadth, and depth, limited by some certain figure" (Spinoza, 1994: 10). The body for Spinoza is defined by its relations and as a result its ability of movement and rest. A body, although a seemingly unified whole, is actually made up of other bodies, or other parts. Hence, what is meant by body here is anything which is composed of parts and relations. It is a fragmented body that includes the human body in its definition, inasmuch as the 'inhuman body' that might initially appear to the human eye as inanimate and immobile, like a work of art. As I have already explained, however, Deleuze's theory of the body deviates from Spinoza's by viewing it as a force that is capable of creative production and is thus defined by its ability to create new bodies.

from the form of representation: if this object is the organism and organisation, it is because the form of representation is first of all organic in itself, it is because the form of representation first of all expresses the organic life of the man as subject" (Deleuze 2005: 87). If representation harbours an imaginary form of unity by creating a form of stasis through identity formation, the figural achieves its disruption and generates mobility instead. Isolation then becomes a means for breaking with the use of particular images which are themselves clichés. As a result, if representation is a means by which the Figure forms a somewhat stable identity (by representing him/herself in the world in a particular way), it is the invisible forces, or sensations, which ensure the destabilisation of that identity. After all, what Bacon's Figures illustrate are "ordinary bodies in ordinary situations of constraint and discomfort […] Bacon's bodies, heads, Figures are made of flesh and what fascinates him are the invisible forces that model flesh or shake it" (Deleuze, 2005: xii). Consequently, for Deleuze, the issue is not one of creating identities or subjectivities but rather to show the inner workings of becoming. Rather than defining the subject by the imaginary unity that the conscious self constructs through linguistic practices, Deleuze's conception of *becoming* defines a consistently fluid de-subjectivation or a breaking-down of those processes that desire to frame the subject within structure and language. Therefore, what defines the subject is not what s/he says about him or herself but rather the relations (otherness) and forces which act upon the subject to break down its own representations of itself and also activate the body or subject by releasing these forces into creative outlets. What appears to be at stake in Deleuze, and in Bacon's paintings, is the attempt to locate the relationship between materiality (the body) and the invisible forces (relations) that affect the body and only become visible as effects on the flesh.

The figural, then, is more than just a mark of formal distinction that separates figurative or representational approaches to painting. Deleuze seeks to illustrate that a different type of figuration exists, ones that avoids cliché and representation and operates instead with sensations that are capable of directly impacting the nervous system and bypassing the modes of communication that require decoding. The "violence of sensation" (a Figure in itself) is an affective sensation that has nothing of the nature of the represented object and comes from "matter itself" (Deleuze, 2005: 28). The figurative work of art therefore represents something that is not present (an object at a distance), and as a consequence, it raises a divisional gap between two levels of reality (illusion and real) and what he names "the binary logic of dichotomy" that creates a distinction between (molecular) content and (molar) expression, appearances and essences, immanence and transcendence: "There is a real distinction between content and expression because the corresponding forms are effectively distinct from the 'thing' itself, and not only in the mind of the observer" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 65). The Figure becomes an aesthetic move that ruptures figuration and closes the gap, in order to confront the essence of the real as it is presented. Deleuze argues that "An intense movement flows through the whole body, a deformed and deforming movement that at every moment transfers the real image onto the body in order to constitute the Figure" (Deleuze, 2005: 14). He states that the body is (the *material* of) the Figure and should not be confused with its spatialising structure that functions in opposition to it. The Figure-body, *isolated* from structure, operates as a kind of recording surface through which variations in sensation are transmitted. This is the point at which the figure becomes Figure (Image, Icon): "Cézanne gave a simple name to this way of the Figure: sensation. The Figure is the sensible form related to a sensation" (Deleuze, 2005: 25). Deleuze notes that Cézanne's lesson against the Impressionists was to

illustrate that sensation is not a 'free' or *disembodied* play of light and colour (impressions) but on the contrary it is *in* the body (even the body of an apple). Cézanne's realisation was that space must be shattered – the fruit bowl must be broken, the fruit allowed to overflow and extend beyond its limits. Deleuze writes that "Colour is in the body, sensation is in the body, and not in the air. Sensation is what is painted. What is painted on the canvas is the body, not insofar as it is represented as an object, but insofar as it is experienced as sustaining *this* sensation" (Deleuze, 2005: 26). The Figure is an "accumulated" or "coagulated" sensation that is rendered visible by disrupting figurative imagery.

If the Figure and its background form an image or relation that is close to Lyotard's figure-image, in my reading of Deleuze *the figure-form* corresponds to the spasmodic contortions of the body. The figure-form as we have seen in Lyotard is the affect as index. Isolation relates to an affective displacement, a deterritorialisation (which is the result of isolating the figure), and extraction involves the processes of reterritorialisation (where the figure dissipates back into the material structure). However, movement here, according to Deleuze, flows in two separate directions at the same time. The first movement involves the isolation of the Figure from the structure, and the isolated Figure functions as a point of departure for lines of flight, or deterritorialisations. Simply put, deterritorialisation is a movement that produces change, and it operates as that which frees up the fixed relations that limit a body, while at the same time exposing it to new organisations. Deterritorialisation, then, resides in territory not as its opposite but as its transformative vector. Deleuze, however, unlike Lyotard, argues that isolation is not enough to break with the figurative. In Francis Bacon's paintings he recognises another movement that functions alongside deterritorialisation and which moves in the opposite direction, namely

reterritorialisation. Deleuze and Guattari write "In short, there are degrees of deterritorialisation that quantify the respective forms and according to which contents and expression are conjugated, feed into each other, accelerate each other, or on the contrary become stabilized and perform a reterritorialisation" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 97). What this means is that for the authors not all deterritorialisation is reterritorialised in the same way, or even reterritorialised at all, although, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Deleuze and Guattari view reterritorialisation as necessary for the creation of art. Deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation (where the transgression of the previous movement is re-stabilised within language and structure) are two separate movements in opposite directions, occurring simultaneously and thus immediate.[16] In other words, the figural is a becoming of the figure. In a similar manner to Lyotard, then, the figural describes affect as a process that is a creative element inciting as well as changing language and the subject, denoting the becoming of both.

In *The Logic of Sensation* deterritorialisation relates to a process of becoming animal, and reterritorialisation is likened to a process of becoming imperceptible. The first movement that Deleuze calls deterritorialisation is equivalent to what Lyotard calls displacement (or a dissensus) and Kristeva destabilisation (see later), and it is what constitutes affect proper. For Deleuze, the second movement of reterritorialisation is a move back into representation. However, it is significant to note that representation here does not mean linguistic representation, since what the figural enables him to argue is that affect can be represented directly and by different means that escape language. He proposes that the process of becoming-animal "In place of formal correspondence, what Bacon's painting constitutes is a zone of indescernibility or undecidability between man

[16] It is significant to note, however, that they are only immediate when discussing the painter or author in the process of creating art. It seems to me that the reader/viewer is not the same as the painter/writer, and therefore the question of whether the viewer or the reader experiences these movements as simultaneous and immediately is left open by Deleuze and Guattari.

and animal" (Deleuze, 2005: 16) and results ultimately in becoming imperceptible: "whatever its importance becoming-animal is only one stage in a more profound becoming-imperceptible in which the figure disappears" (Deleuze, 2005: 25). The two movements that Deleuze describes here are the movement of the Figure within its isolated place and a second movement within the Figure itself. These two movements coexist with one another and function in unison, even forming their own relations. He states:

> Now it's inside the body that something is happening; the body is the source of movement. This is no longer the problem of the place, but rather of the event. If there is an effort, as if it were a matter of undertaking something above and beyond the strength of the body and directed toward a separate object. The body exerts itself in a very precise manner. It is not I who attempt to escape from my body, it is the body that attempts to escape from itself by means of… in short, a spasm: the body as plexus, and its effort or waiting for a spasm. Perhaps this is Bacon's approximation of horror or abjection (Deleuze, 2005: 11).

Becoming animal involves liberating desire from its territorialisation, while becoming imperceptible involves entering a state of movement that eludes perception. The Figure becomes a de-formed Figure that escapes itself. According to Deleuze, the body-Figure has deformation as its destiny, because it has a necessary relationship with its material structure. What this means is that not only does the material structure attempt to invade the body by "curling around it" and closing it within its own structure, but also that the body itself must return to the material structure in order to penetrate and dissipate it. This enables the Figure to pass through the "prosthetic instruments" (the materials constituting the artwork) which formulate passages and states, which Deleuze contends are "real, physical, and effective, and which are sensations and not imaginings" (Deleuze, 2005: 13). Shifting from the spatial to the temporal, the Figure becomes the source of its own movement, in an involuntary spasm it becomes an event, while attesting to its own event at the same time. The first movement of deterritorialisation then becomes a "breaking of a world," in that it breaks with the ready-made and the

cliché. Nonetheless, reterritorialisation functions to reinstate the Figure and also implies the possibility of creating something new (through new relations). Hence, with every breaking of a "world" follows the creation of a new "world." Reterritorialisation involves an immediate return to unity, although this whole is understood as the open. The figural is the force in Francis Bacon's painting, and it disturbs the organic structure of the body and renders it a "body without organs," thereby freeing it from structure. The diagram and the "body without organs" correspond to what Lyotard names the "figure-matrix." Both these terms refer to desire as the force of affect (as a process), which enables reterritorialisation to take place, and in both writers desire is re-conceived as positive and productive, in that it is not only the force of and that which organises affect but is also what produces figure-forms and figure-images, or affections (indexes) and affects (percepts).

In Deleuze's reading of Francis Bacon's paintings, the diagram allows the figural to emerge from the Figure, through random marks on the painting. He defines it as:

> […] the emergence of another world. For these marks, these traits, are irrational, involuntary, accidental, free, random. They are non-representative, nonillustrative, nonnarrative. They are no longer either significant or signifiers: they are asignifying traits. They are traits of sensation, but of confused sensation (the confused sensations, as Cézanne said, that we bring with us at birth) (Deleuze, 2005: 71).

According to Deleuze, these random marks are manual, where the hand has assumed independence and is guided by other forces (that are not those of the painter). The diagram is understood as an art practice whereby there is the necessary involvement of a play of chance which moves beyond any conscious control. These random occurrences are viewed as ontologically constitutive of art rather than as an accident. For this reason, Deleuze argues that art cannot be predetermined from the outset but instead involves a productive encounter with chaos. This is precisely why he states that the diagram is a

polyvalent and disruptive force with no consideration of the figurative aspect of the image. This chaos is the source of sensation. He notes "The diagram is indeed a chaos, a catastrophe, but it is also a germ of order or rhythm. It is a violent chaos in relation to the figurative givens, but it is a germ of rhythm in relation to the new order of painting. As Bacon says, it unlocks areas of sensation. The diagram ends the preparatory work and begins the act of painting" (Deleuze, 2005: 72). In other words, the diagram is where rhythm and chaos meet, where rhythm emerges from chaos, and it is what allows the painting to become an event of sensation and what the artwork aims to capture (as process) and preserve. At the auditory level rhythm appears as music and as painting when it invests in the visual level. Like Lyotard's figure-matrix, the diagram ruptures the narrative or figurative function of the image. Deleuze explains "It is through such a system that geometry becomes sensible, and sensations become clear and durable: one has 'realised' the sensation, says Cézanne. Or following Bacon's formula, one has passed from the possibility of the fact to the Fact, from the diagram to the painting" (Deleuze, 2005: 83). Art here is understood as the production of worlds, and the production of the new or the event in art lies between what is known (the figurative) and the unknown (chaos). Art itself in Deleuze is this passing between the known and unknown, and the figural emerges as that something new. And it is in this way that we can distinguish his approach from Lyotard's. He objects to Lyotard's privileging of abstract art, since abstraction remains almost entirely in the unknown rather than as the in-between space of the assemblage (the known and the unknown), which for him defines the artwork. Furthermore, it is only in this in-between space that new ideas, new representations, new artworks and art forms, as well as new ideas, affects and percepts, can emerge.

Deleuze cautions that absolute deterritorialisation of the Figure, which is the product of abstraction or abstract art, remains within figuration because it is transmitted directly to the head as opposed to the flesh. Abstract paintings thus remain at the same level as the figurative, i.e. "pass[ing] through the brain, they do not act directly on the nervous system, they do not attain the sensation, they do not liberate the Figure – all because they remain at one and the same level" (Deleuze, 2005: 26). Deleuze proposes that in order to liberate the Figure, sensation needs to be transmitted directly to the nervous system, to the flesh. He rejects figuration that is too sensational, arguing that its dramatic impact relies on narrative forms. Bacon's approach to painting the series of screaming Popes (based on Velasquez's portraits of Pope Innocent X) and his statement "I want to paint the scream more than the horror" are repeatedly referred to by Deleuze in *The Logic of Sensation*, in order to emphasise the significance of not representing mimetically but rather through sensation (Deleuze, 2005: 60). Painting the scream, he posits, is not only about making a particular sound visible, but it is also about making visible those invisible forces that make it come about. He claims that " If we scream, it is always as victims of invisible and insensible forces that scramble every spectacle, and that even lie beyond pain and feeling" (Deleuze, 2005: 43). Deleuze contends that painting the scream as opposed to the horror is an act of vital faith that distinguishes between the violence of the spectacle and that of sensation. By removing the spectacle or horror from the scream, we are also removing the narrative or story, and what we are left with are forces of sensation. He argues that "Music, for its part, is faced with the same task, which is certainly not to render the scream harmonious, but to establish a relationship between the sound of the scream and the forces that sustain it. In the same manner, painting will establish a relationship between these forces and the visible scream (the mouth that screams)" (Deleuze, 2005: 42). As such, art's significance

appears to lie within its ability to preserve and illuminate or make visible the processes of the affective register in its ability to instigate the creation of change and newness (and these are the processes that underlie *all* representation) that otherwise escape our perception. And it is these relations of tension between the visible and invisible, actual and virtual, representation and sensation, etc. that allow for the figural to emerge from the figurative. He therefore visualises art as a paradigmatic model that reinvents and redefines what we understand by representation. This, as we shall see next, is developed as a triadic model that brings together signification, image and the affective (real) body.

Deleuze locates three essential elements in Bacon's paintings that are understood as distinct: the structure (signification or language), the Figure (body) and the contour (image). He posits that it is through colour that they converge and create new possibilities, new unities: "it is modulation – that is, the relation between colours – which at the same time explains the unity of the whole, the distribution of each element, and the way each of them acts upon the other" (Deleuze, 2005: 101). Modulation consists of internal variations of intensity, but these variations themselves change depending on the relations of proximity to a particular zone of the field. He claims:

> Colour structure gives sway to colour-force. Each dominant colour and each broken tone indicates the immediate exercise of a force on the corresponding zone of the body or head: *it immediately renders a force visible*. Finally the internal variation of the field was defined in terms of a zone of proximity, which is obtained, as we have with the diagram, as the point of application or agitated locus of all forces, that the flow of colours enters into relations of proximity (Deleuze, 2005: 105).

Modulation, or "colorism," consists of relations between colours. However, colour is also that which converges with these three singularities and as a result is what provides the communication between these essentially non-communicating parts and thus reinstates or immediately reterritorialises by providing unity that remains open.

Deleuze notes that "This sense, or this vision, concerns all the more the totality insofar as the three elements of painting (armature, Figure, and contour) communicate and

converge in colour" (Deleuze, 2005: 106). Therefore, the coexistence of all these movements (diastole and systole, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation) in painting are understood as *rhythm*, for he argues that:

> But there is already a diastole in the first movement, when the body extends itself in order to better close in on itself; and there is a systole in the second movement, when the body is dissipated, it still remains contracted by the forces that seize hold of it in order to return it to its surroundings. The coexistence of all these movements in the painting… *is rhythm* (Deleuze, 2005: 24; my emphasis).

From the viewpoint of Deleuze, the phenomenological unity of the senses is the coexistence of harmony between sensation and rhythm. Sensation has one face turned towards the subject – the nervous system, vital movement, etc. – and the other towards the object – the 'fact', the place, the event:

> […] or rather, it has no faces at all, it is both things indissolubly, it is Being-in-the-World, as the phenomenologists say: at one and the same time I *become* in the sensation and something *happens* through the sensation, one through the other, one in the other. And at the limit, it is the same body which, being both subject and object, gives and receives the sensation (Deleuze, 2005: 25).

While the face is usually understood in terms of that which is individuating, social and communicative, for Deleuze the face is an assemblage, which, in its multiplicity, acts simultaneously on semiotic flows, material flows and social flows while remaining independent of any theoretical or scientific recuperation. These flows are non-discursive and instead imply an internal movement that perhaps can be viewed as a contradiction in Deleuze's theory of pure immanence, since he attempts to remove any opposition that implies the binary between inside or outside. How, then, does he explain the occurrence of internal movement when discussing the different levels of sensation?

All bodies are capable of internal movement, through the relations that comprise them. In fact, Deleuze argues that there are different levels of sensation. According to him:

> […] the form related to the sensation (the Figure) is the opposite of the form related to an object that it is supposed to represent (figuration). […] Sensation is that which is

> transmitted directly, and avoids the detour and boredom of conveying a story. And positively, Bacon constantly says that sensation is what passes from one 'order' to another, from one 'level' to another, from one 'area' to another. This is why sensation is the master of deformations, the agent of bodily deformations (Deleuze, 2005: 26).

He proposes that the Figure is liberated because it is able to pass from one level or order of sensation to another. Hence, the Figure is able to implement transformations of form, as well as deformations of bodies. However, what does it mean to pass through "orders of sensation" or "areas of sensation"? Different orders of sensation are taken to mean that each area or level corresponds to a specific sensation, and "each sensation would thus be a term in a sequence of a series" (Deleuze, 2005: 26-27). Deleuze argues that each series would then involve us in a different feeling, and he uses the example of the series of Popes, the series of crucifixions and the series of self-portraits in Bacon's paintings. He states that these levels of feeling do not relate to different sensation; rather, he asserts:

> It is each painting, each Figure, that is itself a shifting sequence or series (and not simply a term in a series); it is each sensation that exists at diverse levels, in different orders, or in different domains. This means that there are not sensations of different orders, but different orders of one and the same sensation. It is the nature of sensation to envelop a constitutive difference of level, a plurality of constituting domains. Every sensation, and every Figure, is already an 'accumulated', or 'coagulated' sensation, as in a limestone figure. Hence the irreducibly synthetic character of sensation (Deleuze, 2005: 27).

What, then, is the source of sensation's synthetic character, which allows it to pass from one order to another? What are these levels? And what constructs their sensing or sensed unity? Deleuze argues that it is not movement which explains sensation; on the contrary, movement is explained "by the elasticity of sensation, its *vis elastica*. […] The true acrobat is one who is consigned to immobility inside the circle" (Deleuze, 2005: 29). Thus, it is not movement which explains the levels of sensation but it is the levels of sensation which explain what remains of movement. Movement here is understood as movement "in place" – a spasm, "the action of invisible forces on the body" (Deleuze,

2005: 30) or bodily deformations. What Deleuze is arguing here is that the source of sensation's synthetic character, i.e. that which allows sensation to pass from one order to another, is the body's relations or, as he puts it, the invisible forces that take action upon a body. In answer to the question as to the nature of these levels, he argues that the levels of sensation are domains of sensation which refer to the different sensory organs "Between a colour, a taste, a smell, a noise, a weight, there would be an existential communication that would constitute the 'pathic' (non-representative) moment of the sensation" (Deleuze, 2005: 30). What therefore makes up this sensing or sensed unity is the power of rhythm, which he names precisely "the logic of the senses." Furthermore, he claims "Rhythm appears as music when it invests the auditory level, and as painting when it invests the visual level. This is a 'logic of the senses', as Cézanne said, which is neither rational nor cerebral" (Deleuze, 2005: 30). What is crucial here is this relationship between sensation and rhythm, in that rhythm runs through a painting in the same way as it does in a piece of music: "It is a diastole-systole: the world that seizes me by closing in around me, the self that opens to the world and opens the world itself" (Deleuze, 2005: 30-31). This rhythmic unity of the senses is only possible when we go beyond the living organism. Deleuze invokes Artaud, and then he discusses what he means by going beyond the organism, whereby at the limits of the lived body, we find the body without organs (BwO), which is opposed less to organs and more to the organisation thereof. This is an intense and intensive body. The Figure itself is the body without organs, a body without a face and that which lies "beneath" the organism and organisation. The BwO is comparable to Lyotard's figure-matrix, as both link the respective terms to desire and describe it as the force of the figural. Affect in both is violence within the symbolic order that displaces both the subject and his or her language, while desire is the force that allows for reterritorialisation, and therefore new

relations, to take place. Both Deleuze and Lyotard argue that desire and affect form a reciprocal relationship whereby the one informs the other, thus enabling the creation of new thoughts and new artworks.

Deleuze reconfigures desire as positive and productive, and like Lyotard he argues that what we desire, what we invest our desire in, is a social formation which is determined neither by conscious will nor by conscious decisions or even a pre-conscious interest. Rather, our desires, drives and affects are not our own; they are always already part of the social infrastructure and not simply our own individual mental or psychic reality. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, desire is defined by an insatiable lack that is regulated by Oedipal Law. This means that desire is organised externally in relation to prohibitions, and as a result is it constituted by privation. Lacan's premise is that "man's desire is the desire of the Other" (Lacan, 2004: 15). In psychoanalytic theory, the concept of desire is seminal to the production of subjectivity. Deleuze does not undermine the importance of desire, though, and he develops it as a central axiom of his own theory of affective becomings through material flows. Significantly, however, the concept of desire undergoes a critical evaluation in Deleuze and Guattari, since it is developed not as lacking but as both positive and productive, i.e. it is defined as a process of experimentation on a plan of immanence. They maintain that "Desire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is rather the subject that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 26), and whereas psychoanalytic theory understands desire as an impotent force located *in* the individual, Deleuze's productive view renders it a social force that enables the forming of connections while augmenting the power of bodies in their connection. According to *Anti-Oedipus*, desire is described as unconscious, assembled or machined, and it is continuous and in flux.

What makes Deleuze's position on the work of art "as a being of sensation" that exists independently of its creator possible is that, for him, the human beings that create these works of art are themselves only collections of forces that have arisen from intensive flows. Artists are not in themselves the source of affect but rather a changing and unstable chaos, without a fixed origin from where unanticipated folds of becoming can emerge. The subject here is therefore not a privileged creator or receiver of sensation but part of the process as a whole. Deleuze explains that desire is not a natural state that is returned to but something that exists when it is "assembled or machined. You cannot grasp or conceive of a desire outside a determinate assemblage, on a plane which is non-pre-existent but which must itself be constructed" (Deleuze and Parnet, 2007: 96). In other words, like Lyotard, he argues that we make desire rather than find our desire. However, if desire is always already social and populated, is this view not a contradiction, since it means that desire is always to a certain degree found? Nevertheless, Deleuze highlights that desire is mobilised only through "construction," and it is thus neither an "idealised pre-world" nor a utopian metaphysical goal that exists in a beyond; instead, it is immanent: "There is only desire and the social, and nothing else" (Deleuze, 1983: 38). Likewise, sensation comes from matter, not as something fixed and stable but as shifting potential that is capable of opening up difference that "diastole" has closed. This is not a return to a previous state but an opening a "systole" (a deterritorialisation) that has been closed (due to diastole) to human perception, through the activation of a potential futurity contained within the "vibration" of sensation. Art, therefore, is not viewed as a "transcendent beyond" separated from the social but as a space which has the force to think difference. According to Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*:

> If desire produces, its product is real. If desire is productive, it can be productive only in the real world and can produce only reality. Desire is the passive synthesis that engineer

> partial objects, flows and bodies, and that function units of production. The real is the end product, the result of the passive synthesis of desire as auto-production of the unconscious (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 26).

And in *A Thousand Plateaus* they claim that "The BwO is desire; it is that which one desires and by which one desires" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 183). The body without organs is a means of escaping the Oedipal paradigm and challenges the world of the articulating, self-defining and self-enclosed subject in Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis. In contrast, Kristeva and Lyotard, both of whom take the psychoanalytic model of affect, return to Freud's pre-Oedipal (and pre-discursive) realm. I will be coming back to this difference between them in the following chapter in a discussion relating to the notion of transgression.

The body without organs is conceived as a substrate, which is also identified as the plane of consistency, but as a non-formed, non-organised, non-stratified or de-stratified body or term. The BwO is conceived as something of an antidote to the Oedipalised subject, for it has no need for interpretation, and it is the precedent, the antecedent and even the correlate to the articulated and organised organism and in fact is not in opposition to the organism or notions of subjectivity, for it is never completely free of language, state, family and other institutions:

> The BwO is a childhood block, a becoming, the opposite of a childhood memory. It is not the child 'before' the adult, or the mother 'before' the child: it is the strict contemporaneousness of the adult, of the adult and the child […] Desire stretches that far: desiring one's own annihilation, or desiring the power to annihilate. Money, army, police, and State desire, fascist desire, even fascism is desire (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 182/3).

However, the implication of body without organs in institutionalised organisation, desire is everywhere and nowhere, both disparate and homogeneous. Therefore, the body without organs exists within the stratified fields of organisation inasmuch as it is posited as a mode of being or experience, that is, a becoming, even though it cannot

break away entirely from the system from which it desires to escape. It thus exists in the system, but only to subvert it. Desire as the BwO takes its place as a pre-symbolic and affective becoming that has its own mode of organisation as uncontained matter or a collection of heterogeneous parts. The desire he speaks of therefore mirrors Lyotard, in that it is an unconscious desire. With this model of desire in mind I now turn my attention to the issue of subject-identity formation. The model of desire that Deleuze and Guattari propose, namely the simultaneous presence of "adult and child," is different to the swinging back and forth between the two that Lyotard proposes, and it is explained through their notion of schizophrenia. For Lyotard the notion of the infant (affect) is both the starting point and the process by which subject position and identity formation (in language) are created and can take place. For Deleuze and Guattari it is the subject-less (ego-less) schizophrenic that upsets the system.

III The Deleuzian Subject

Deleuze rejects 'the body' as a humanist ideal, regarding it as anthropocentric. Instead, it is the activities, affects and forces of the human body, as productive of subjectivity that opens up an array of ethical questions. In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari's approach to how subject-identities form is related to the schizophrenic. They note that "Freud doesn't like schizophrenics. He doesn't like their resistance to being Oedipalised, and tends to treat them more or less like animals. They mistake words for things, he says. They are apathetic narcissistic, cut off from reality, incapable of achieving transference; they resemble philosophers – 'an undesirable resemblance'" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 25). They also contend that the schizophrenic upsets the Freudian psychoanalytic system, since s/he cannot be included within it. In addition, the schizophrenic has not yet developed an ego and as a result has not gone through the

Oedipal process of individuation, therefore making the schizophrenic always "somewhere else, beyond or behind or below" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 25), and since the schizoid has no 'me', it also does not have an unconscious which is preoccupied with the Oedipal drama, and it provides Deleuze with a way to explain the deterritorialisation process as a process of (anti-Oedipal) individuation that is always a multiple and relational, becoming-other: "The other in me" (Deleuze, 1988: 98). This is an unconscious process that belongs not to a pre-existing Ego but to "the fractured I of a dissolved Cogito" (Deleuze, 1994: 194). The fractured pieces are to be put together. Subjectivity does not presuppose identity but is produced in a process of individuation, and it too must be thought of as a relation that is multiple. The process of individuation is artistic and creative and includes the metaphoric death of the subject. This process, as we have seen, is an unconscious affective one and is created through the other. And by 'other', Deleuze, and Lyotard too, refer not only to the other of language and therefore affect, but also to a real other. Deleuze (unlike Lyotard) does not necessarily disagree with Lacan's understanding of the unconscious "structured like a language;" however, he does rewrite the theory of language as an assemblage where content and expression presuppose one another reciprocally.

For Deleuze, therefore, subjectivation (the relation to oneself) is a multiplicity which is not based on any code (including moral code) but is instead artistic, aesthetic or ethical (focused on a demand for equality). His understanding of 'becoming' entails a dynamics of multiplicity that "changes in nature as it expands its connections" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 9). Hence, becoming for Deleuze is based on these affective relations or 'connections' that alter, create anew and expand the subject to become something other – becoming-animal, becoming-woman, becoming-world, becoming-child – and borders on the element of minority that is a "becoming-minor." From the

perspective of Deleuze, subjectivity is viewed as a process of "becoming" that focuses on the micro-political dimension of culture which differs greatly from the macro-political (top-down) approach of linguistic theories whereby instead of language situating the subject, it is the experiential, contextual and circumstantial that become the sites upon which subjects are situated and produced. Subjectivity is thus multiple, since the (anti-Oedipal) process of individuation that Deleuze (and Lyotard) describes is always already collective. He argues in *Dialogues II* that:

> […] it is an extremely populous solitude. Populated not with dreams, phantasms, or plans, but with encounters. An encounter is perhaps the same thing as a becoming, or nuptials. It is from the depth of this solitude that you can make any encounter whatsoever. You encounter people […] but also movements, ideas, events, entities (Deleuze and Parnet, 2007: 6).

Moreover, encounters do not have proper names or designate a person or a subject, but rather an effect. The process that it reveals is not linear – it is more like a zigzag where something always occurs *between two.* Intensity for Deleuze is therefore a form of power that traverses the experiential state of the body, affecting or influencing the body's capability to act and react. The body in Deleuze is active and has the ability 'to affect', by producing complicated rhizomes (rather than a single root).

Between the affect and the percept is the non-place of the gap, which acts as a differentiator and allows for the intervention of difference. Becoming takes place between two multiplicities, where becoming is not becoming the other but becoming-other. Deleuze and Guattari claim:

> Becoming while happening in a gap, is nonetheless and an extreme contiguity with coupling of two sensations without resemblance or, on the contrary, in the distance of a light that captures both of them in a single reflection[…] It is a zone of indetermination, of indescernibility, as if things, beasts, and persons[…] endlessly reach that point that immediately precedes their natural differentiation. This is what is called an affect (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 173).

For Deleuze, the production of subjectivity is a creative and artistic process, for "affects […] traverse [one's universe] like arrows or […] like a beam of light that draws a hidden universe out of the shadow […] Art thinks no less than philosophy, but it thinks through affects and percepts" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 66). Additionally, affects are immanent and immanence is "no longer immanent to something other than itself" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 47). Deleuze's conceptualisation of the plane of immanence is linked to a radical empiricism which "knows only events and other people and is therefore a creator of great concepts" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 48), However, according to Inna Semetsky, "The topological nuance as expressed in the plane inherent in the affective dimension brings forth the spatial metaphor; events or becomings are not in flux, but happen in the uncertain, yet highly specific, space – non-place between multiplicities, whose mode of existence is a multitude of differential relations" (Semetsky, 2003: 214). In this sense, philosophical thinking does not conform to the progressive building of knowledge but rather a line of becoming which is not defined by points that it connects, or even by points that constitute it. Rather, it passes *between* points and comes up through the middle which, according to Deleuze, is not an average but "an absolute speed of movement," while the becoming is neither one nor two but the in-between which produces a *shared* deterritorialisation.

According to *A Thousand Plateaus*, the death of the subject need not be mourned, for "when something occurs, the self that awaited it is already dead, or the one that would await it has not yet arrived" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 219). The conscious self thus remains out of line with itself and its environment. The event as an occurrence is part of (everyday) human experience and is to be understood as a condition of possibility or, as Brian Massumi puts it in *Parables of the Virtual* (2002), a "potentialization" that carries the "seed [of] yet uncoded possibilities: inventions […]

[where] new thoughts may be thought and new feelings felt" (Massumi, 2002: 141). Conversely, becoming is a becoming of something other than one's present self. The notion of subjectivity in this respect relies primarily on its affective relations that are both primary and prior to identity formation constructed by a conscious ego through linguistic practices. As stated by Deleuze, "If there's a subject, it's a subject without any identity. Subjectivation as a process is personal or collective individuation, individuation one by one or group by group" (Deleuze, 1995: 115). Subjectivation, in his philosophy of creation, operates as a mode of creative potential that becomes manifest in one's ability to express oneself freely and passionately. However, this "has little to do with any subject. It's to do, rather, with an electric or magnetic field an individuation taking place through intensities […] it's to do with individuated fields, not persons or identities" (Deleuze, 1995: 93). Subjectivity therefore becomes the means by which one's expressing oneself is done so in order to "bring something to life, to free life from where it's trapped, to trace one's line of flight" (Deleuze, 1995: 141), in order to break down old methods and break into new territories and new modes of action. Hence, the Deleuzian subject, in a process of becoming-other, is not socially isolated but always open to material forces that construe it by means of interaction with the outside through a third or a middle, which he calls "the diagram" and is the space that is opened up by desire. Deleuze's subject is therefore affective and finds its force in desire.

Conclusion

The figural in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* becomes a means through which to think beyond the human, and it is understood as a representational mode. The Figure (body), or the human, is not abandoned but rather it is stretched and twisted into

new and creative forms. The figural allows for the rupturing, and as a result the releasing, of forces from within that are always already without, autonomous and a-subjective, and it occurs from within the figurative. The diagram in painting is capable of capturing and preserving the processes and the force of the figural, whereas minor literature involves the use of "stuttering" as a point of indeterminacy whereby something new may appear or emerge. Both are productive concepts in understanding contemporary art practices, but they also provide a space in which an affective theory which is not attached and subordinated to language may emerge.

Both Lyotard and Deleuze place the realm of affect and sensation, the process, which they both call the figural, at the base of their aesthetics and ontology. According to Jacques Rancière, Deleuze's account of affect (inasmuch as Lyotard's) has the Kantian sublime at its very base. To explain, Deleuze alters Kant's language of the faculties in order to highlight the primacy of affect. In revising Kant's language of the faculties Deleuze calls into question the dualist structure of his thought (where juridical reason regulates the field of experience). And instead, he uses the language of the faculties to not only describe a register of affect, but more importantly, to show that the force of affect drives the faculties to consistently surpass their limits. Hence, if Deleuze is interested in the sublime as Rancière claims, it is only insofar as it allows him to illustrate the primacy of affect as the unrepresentable, which can be thought of as similar to Lyotard's missed encounter of an unconscious desire. The sublime testifies to the primacy of sensation and to the constant operations of a trans-sensible aesthetic rhythm that underlies all experience, and according to Rancière, for Deleuze "Art is politics" (Rancière, 2010: 21). The artwork is viewed as raw sensation torn from clichés and banalities in such a way as to allow this genetic difference to become productive. This sensation, as we have seen in *The Logic of Sensation*, is not representational – it

opens onto, inasmuch as it is part of, a "molecular world, in-determined, un-individualised, before representation, before the principle of reason"; this is a world of indeterminacy in relation to concepts, but also "the discovery of fraternity in political terms" (Rancière, 2004b: 150). It is the sublime gap between human (language) and inhuman (sensation that it expresses) that constructs a future community of a "people to come." Art here is a promise in two conflicting ways, since it "does so insofar as it is art and insofar as it is not art" (Rancière, 2010: 177). In Deleuze, art therefore announces a "people to come" through a sublime break, and it is the artwork that breaks away from the world and becomes "a thing in itself," as well as being viewed as the break itself, and acts as the transcendental object of a political community. Moreover, it becomes the inhuman and immanent excess that directs the process of individuation in which the organism is overcome and makes the new emerge. The problem that Rancière has with this view of art is that it both affirms art in the highest terms and also implies its disappearance. He calls it an "ethical confusion," where art and politics vanish through their union. The point for Rancière is not to obliterate the difference between art and politics "but to maintain the very tension by which a politics of art and a poetics of politics tend toward each other, but cannot meet up without suppressing themselves" (Rancière, 2010: 183). According to Rancière, in Deleuze's understanding art is a deterritorialising force that operates against the Law and calls for a people to come, while for Lyotard art separates the mind from itself and testifies to an irremediable alienation from the Other. The transcendental difference is genetic for both; however, for Lyotard it can only give rise to an acknowledgment of the impossibility of ever experiencing heterogeneity. In Deleuze, contrastingly, difference produces a real experience (an actual) that is nonetheless a-subjective individuation that expresses and

constructs directly a virtual idea (possibility). Rancière determines that Lyotard's conclusions:

> […] are assuredly less appealing [than those of Deleuze]. I fear, however, that they are more logical, that the transcendence instituted at the heart of Immanence, in fact, signifies the submission of art to a law of heteronomy which undermines every form of transmission of the vibration of colour and of the embrace of forms to the vibrations and to the embraces of a fraternal humanity (Rancière, 2010: 182).

Deleuze views sensation, or the "pure sensible," as rejecting discursive difference (or dissensus), which is something that Rancière argues we must hold on to. However, in both writers' accounts of sublime difference, the sensation obliterates the communication of disagreement and the community it produces. Rancière states that "Nothing else is formed except the identity of the infinite power of difference and the indifference of the Infinite. And the question remains: how can one make a difference in the political community with this indifference?" (Rancière, 2004: 163). consequently, the difference between aesthetics and politics should not collapse, but more than that, the identity formed is nothing but that of difference which is in itself indifferent. He asks how, then, can one make a difference within the social sphere with something that is indifferent? Aesthetics here, he claims, becomes a continual re-enactment of artworks' hysterical de-formation (deterritorialisation) of the human. This can be explained with what I have already mentioned elsewhere as Lyotard and Deleuze's privileging of art as that which reveals the processes of affect and the visual. In other words, for Rancière it is not possible to make a political difference or statement with the sort of aesthetics and particular artworks that Lyotard and Deleuze suggest.

There are indeed similarities between Lyotard and Deleuze's work, in that they share certain ideas that feature prominently in both of their works on affect. However, while Lyotard understands affect as transcendence in immanence, for Deleuze there is a greater need for immediacy, or immediate "reterritorialisation," and he understands

affect as purely immanent. In this sense they differ in how they understand affect's temporal and spatial mechanisms, but they also differ in how they view the notion of difference, i.e. the one comes from the outside while the other comes from within. Their work displays a subtle yet significantly different attitude to the concept of desire. The psychoanalytic understanding of desire as lack is revised as a productive figure-matrix (in Lyotard) and a body without organs (in Deleuze), denoting in both instances affective becomings. *Discourse, Figure*'s influence on Deleuze's use of the term 'figural' is clear, yet Deleuze does not embrace all aspects of Lyotard's concept, for he relates the figural to sensation and affect "without resorting to the theoretical presuppositions of Freudian psychoanalysis or conventional phenomenology" (Bogue, 2003b: 112). Their different responses to Freud produce an underlying question that permeates their work on affect and desire. While Deleuze in *Anti-Oedipus* praises Lyotard's conceptualisation of the figural as force or desire, he also questions the role given to transgression and argues that it results not in deformation but in transformation. Deleuze and Guattari write:

> But what explains the reader's impression that Lyotard is continually arresting the process, and steering the schizzes towards shores he has so recently left behind: toward coded or overcoded territories, spaces, and structures, to which they bring only 'transgressions', disorders, and deformations that are secondary in spite of everything, instead of forming and transporting further the desiring-machines that are in opposition to the structures, and the intensities that are in opposition to the spaces? (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 244).

The role of transgression is a crucial difference between, on the one hand, Lyotard and Kristeva and, on the other hand, Deleuze (see the following chapter). In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze notes that transgression and deformation are central characteristics of the figural in Lyotard, since the figural functions within structured systems of representation, and it is through deformation that the presence of desire is signalled.

In *Discourse, Figure* Lyotard refers to the Freudian process of the dream-work to illustrate that it functions in opposition to the rules of discourse and the violence of its transgression. He maintains that "Desire does not speak, it does violence to the order of utterance" (Lyotard, 2011: 233), and it is not an already established system but a simultaneous and primordial compound that is "at once discourse and figure" (Lyotard, 2011: 267). For Lyotard, transgression cannot function without a limit, but in contrast, Deleuze posits that there is no "beyond" and therefore there is no limit – as James Williams notes in *Lyotard: Towards a Postmodern Philosophy*. In his commentary on *Anti-Oedipus*, Lyotard argues that "In Deleuze and Guattari's book you will see everywhere their utter contempt for the category of transgression" (Lyotard, 1977: 11), and concerning the movement of desire in their work he contends that "desire actually wanders about the limit's field – and its movement is not that of transgressing the limit, but rather of pulverising the field itself into a libidinal surface" (Lyotard, 1977: 25). Deleuze's movements of desire are unmistakably concomitant with Lyotard's conception of the libidinal band, where there is no inside or outside and there can be no limit other than a constantly shifting surface of libidinal intensities. While their approach to an affirmative desire-as-force, or desire as affective force, is similar, Lyotard's stopping, stalling and stuttering is not the same as Deleuze's smooth flows, and the former is continually arresting the process in his seeking out what is rendered mute.

Lyotard's view of the figural relies on separation and distance between the subject (the body) and the affect. This distance, however, is not one that refers to space but time. Affect happens within the subject and is the trace of a real that pertains to a particular event. Deleuze's view, contrastingly, is that affect performs a double movement in space. Deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation negate material and

psychic time in its immediacy, since the two movements coincide, and the process of becoming has neither a beginning nor an end. The process of "becoming-animal" is not a passage from human to animal, like Lyotard's becoming inhuman that passes from human to infant and vice versa; rather, the process is a becoming through the 'fact' of a common or communal zone between man and animal, where the body itself attempts to escape from itself and disperse into an assemblage of forces. Deleuze argues that Bacon's figures are not faces (not of flesh) but heads (of meat), which constitutes a zone of indescernibility or undecidability between man and animal "where animal traits and animal spirit are actualised" (Deleuze, 2005: 16). Lyotard, in contradistinction, insists that separation is essential to representation, and following a psychoanalytic path he argues that it is what Narcissus cannot attain: "It is a longing of Narcissus the inseparable: I would like for what I love to be distant. Without the work of this mourning there will be no representation. Narcissus is not an artist but a representation of impossible art" (Lyotard, 2012b: 209). It is impossible because the distance between image and object, word and thing, cannot be removed, since it is a prerequisite of language and representation. Art is therefore unfulfilling for Lyotard, even though it forms a double bind. On the one hand, "the language system does not speak" and it is instead the figural which (mutely/invisibly) speaks and forms the subject of enunciation. On the other hand, he claims in *Driftworks* that "if desire can be fulfilled in the work of art, then the work of art gives something to hope for. I believe that what is revolutionary is precisely to hope for nothing" (Lyotard, 1984b: 78), which creates a clear separation between Lyotard's view of art from the Freudian view of art as a symptom or as "an exteriorization of the artist's phantasy." Instead, he views it as a fulfilment of (a real) desire.

In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari criticise Lyotard for holding on to the negation on which they consider the hegemony of desire as lack to be founded, where repression is understood as the inescapable guilt in the Oedipus complex. They state that "despite his attempt at linking desire to a fundamental *yes*, Lyotard reintroduces lack and absence into desire; maintains desire under the law of castration, at the risk of restoring the entire signifier along with the law; and discovers the matrix of the figure in fantasy, the simple fantasy that comes to veil desiring production" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 244). In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze (and Guattari) acknowledge the impact of *Discourse, Figure* on his/their work in more than one place and in particular in reference to the relationship between representation and designation, or what the authors term "territorial representation," i.e. using the eye to see the word and not to read it. Lyotard, he claims, re-establishes the overly neglected modality of designation and shows the irreducible gap between the word and the thing in the relationship of designation that connotes them. However, he proposes that for Lyotard it is by virtue of this gap that the thing designated becomes the sign, by revealing an unknown facet as a hidden content. Deleuze and Guattari argue that in Lyotard "Words are not themselves signs, but they transform into signs the things or bodies they designate. At the same time, it is the designating word that becomes visible, independently of any writing-reading, by revealing a strange ability to be seen not read" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 204), but for Lyotard the gap between the word and the thing is bridged by the "eye" which sees without reading, inasmuch as it appraises pain emanating from the image (graphism) and applied to the flesh itself: "The eye jumps." Seeing thereby attempts to disturb and overcome the heterogeneous representation of words and things and has the resulting effect of an eye that jumps.[17] Hence, according to Deleuze, Lyotard

[17] Deleuze quoting Lyotard refers to the following passage: "Words are not things, but as soon as there is

reintroduces lack (and hegemony) into desire: first, by holding on to distance and negation (writing in Lyotard supposes a process of mourning), second, by transforming the sign into the real thing (as opposed to Deleuze's deforming), and third, because Lyotard, he claims, understands the force of the figural, i.e. "the matrix," as being inherent in fantasy (unlike his own notion of sensation that affects the flesh or skin directly).

What Deleuze does not take into consideration is the importance that Lyotard assigns to the process of negativity, and the extent to which such a process of concealment has as its foundation the force of the figural that will burst out into libidinal desire in such a way that cannot be stimulated in the same way as Deleuze assumes. Lyotard makes this point clear when he says that "Desire has its rejection embedded within itself, which is the principle of the dispossession of its effects. Desire is truly unacceptable. One cannot pretend to accept it, for accepting it is still to reject it. It will become event elsewhere" (Lyotard, 2011: 16). Negation is key to Lyotard's approach to desire in *Discourse, Figure*, and the three central modes of negation are: the negation on which Saussure bases his view of language, the negation by which phenomenology establishes the object relation in distance and the psychoanalytic mode of negation in Freud. All three aspects reveal the dominance of discourse at the cost of marginalising the figure; however, it is psychoanalytic negation which reveals the correlation of the figural-as-desire through the workings of the unconscious. Lyotard highlights the role of negation as signalling the unrepresentable presence of desire in discourse, fuelled by the unconscious. In Freud's work on the unconscious (although it knows no negation) its presence can be indicated in the conscious realm when uttered as denial, while in psychoanalysis, the continual denial in the discourse of the analysand

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a word, the object designated becomes a sign, which means precisely that it conceals a hidden content within its manifest identity, and that it reserves another face for another viewer focused on it […] which perhaps will never be seen" (Deleuze, 2004: 204).

indicates the workings of desire, made possible through negation: "'Negation', Freud stated, 'is a way of taking cognizance of what is repressed'" (Lyotard, 2011: 116). Lyotard concentrates on one specific example that is given by Freud whereby a patient recalling a person in a dream insists "it's not my mother." Disregarding the negation as being the work of denial, Freud concludes "So it is *his* mother." This transgression of the logic of language constitutes the basis of the figural at work. In the sentiment expressed ("it's not my mother"), the patient is capable of distinguishing between the person in the dream and his mother. However, the analyst's shift to "it is his mother," and the negativity of denial, is provided as an affirmation. Freud thereby introduces a different type of negation. For Lyotard this is precisely the work of desire as the figure-matrix – by transgressing linguistic spaces or gaps, the mother is located outside designation and signification, since dreaming about her is prohibited (as a result of the incest taboo). In denying that the person in his dream is his mother, the patient is able to rehabilitate her as a "lost object," making the repressed desire positive via a repetition of the denial. Hence, the mother is constituted simultaneously in various heterogeneous forms and on different planes: she is reconstituted as a presence in discourse (as lost object), whilst the repressed is consciously acknowledged and the detrimental desire to negate her is kept outside. It is not that this 'no' is substituted with an affirmative 'yes' but rather a double negation, where he goes from the 'no' of syntax to the 'no' of transcendence (the latter being a position located externally).

What the 'no' of transcendence refers to is Lyotard's discussion on phenomenology and the process of 'distanciation', in which case it is necessary to bring back the dream into articulated discourse. The acceptance of denial at the level of knowledge leads Freud to speculate on the process by which judgment in the formation of both the pleasure-ego and reality-ego could be aligned to "primary instinctual

impulses." The pleasure ego introjects that which is good and ejects or abjects that which is deemed bad, while the reality ego establishes an understanding of exteriority based not on an object's quality but on its accessibility (the ability to re-find external perceptions). Since both processes of judgment rely on the exterior and the interior, Freud views the implied correlation between the acceptance by the ego and Eros, and between abjection, expulsion and the destructive drive. He claims "The polarity of judgment appears to correspond to the opposition of the two groups of instincts which we have supposed to exist. Affirmation – as a substitute for uniting – belongs to Eros; negation – the successor to expulsion – belongs to the instinct of destruction" (Freud 2011: 170; cited in Mary Kay O'Neil in *Freud On 'Negation'*). Lyotard, however, questions the release of the two forms of judgment, rejecting the notion that the pleasure-ego's expulsion might somehow involve the formation of reality. In contrast to Freud, he argues:

> The pleasure-ego, as it spits out what is bad, does not constitute reality. What is spat out is spat out, and no longer exists for the body of pleasure; it is obliterated. For what has been rejected to be something nonetheless, the drive to destroy must be supplemented by the opposite power to appresent [appresenter] absence. Then loss may count as loss, the presence of a lack, and the object may count as reality, something that *is* even when it is not there. But what exactly is this power to render present, to 'reproduce as representation' an absent object? It is, says Freud, the power of linguistic negation (Lyotard, 2011: 123).

This is the key element in Lyotard's argument, whilst discourse is constituted on an essential rupture and distanciation. An affirmative desire for the lost object is inherent in all discourse and is what Lyotard names "its silent support" (Lyotard, 2011: 116). For Lyotard this polarisation between the intellectual and the affective is rejected,[18] as the

[18] According to Abraham Drassinower in *Freud's Theory of Culture: Eros, Loss, and Politics* (2003), Jean Hyppolite, referring to the role of negation and repression in Freud, states that "This seems very profound to me. If the psychoanalysed person accepts this, he goes back on negation and yet the repression is still there! I conclude from this that one must give what happens here a philosophical name, a name Freud did not pronounce: negation of the negation. Literally, what transpires here is intellectual but only intellectual, affirmation qua negation of the negation. And at this point 'Freud finds himself in a position

ungraspable cannot be brought to the surface through articulated presentation or writing (only visual art has the ability to present affect and the inner workings of desire), although their trace is always felt. In addition, he posits that art should disturb, not comfort and soothe, and it need not be created from good form but from the rupture embedded in the process of representation. He argues further that the question of desire is more complex than establishing "a thread of referential distance" (that is necessary to language): "The pulsing between eaten-introjected and spat-expelled does not determine a relation with the breast. Instead it marks the pleasure-ego's rhythm – non-cumulative and non-referred, oscillating between release and tension and governed by the principle" (Lyotard, 2011: 122). Therefore, in returning to the pre-Oedipal infant in Freudian psychoanalysis, Lyotard is considered problematic by Deleuze, who, together with Guattari, argues that he reintroduces lack into his model of desire. The infant, as we have seen in the previous chapter and which will also be discussed in the next chapter, is a deficient figure. But more importantly the notion of the infant "maintains desire under the law of castration and at the risk of restoring the entire signifier along with the law" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 244).

Lyotard asserts that the process of separation does not necessarily indicate a utopian beyond but is rather a necessary part of activating difference. The graphic line (image) cannot become a letter – it can only activate a line of desire that already exists. This is true for both Deleuze and Lyotard. And if Lyotard highlights the role of 'distanciation,' or transgression, in the passage of representation, it is not merely to exclude the object of representation but also to bring into play the forces of its absence, released as desire in the line itself. He seeks not to reveal the lost object but to open up

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to be able to show the intellectual separates 'in action' from the affective, and to give a formulation of a sort of genesis of judgment, that is, in short, a genesis of thought'" (Drassinower, 2003: 83-4).

and reveal momentarily an instance of desire. Significantly, both Deleuze and Lyotard break with the representational understanding of language, as both provide an understanding of expression in art and language which does not simply relate to representation, meaning and interpretation; instead, art involves the process of making visible the invisible and sonorous blocks of sensation which operate in artwork.

Chapter 4: Julia Kristeva and Affect: From the Semiotic to Love

This chapter will provide an account of Julia Kristeva's early thought as it develops in her 1974 doctoral thesis, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974) and her later work of the 1980s. The work of Julia Kristeva evolves through a series of considerations of different concepts, but common to them all is the affirmation of the constitutive and dynamic role of affect in relation to artistic, linguistic and subjective practices. In this chapter, I will move through analyses and explications of a number of her works in order to illustrate this, establishing throughout the parallels with the work of Deleuze and Lyotard. This chapter will thus address in the main the notion of the semiotic, that I align here with the notion of affect.

In *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974), Kristeva presents the affective register as a *transgressive force* and *potentiality* that gives rise to artistic practices and incites subjective renewal. She differentiates between the affect-index (the semiotic) and a larger process that she names the semiotic chora which entails an affective process of becoming. Kristeva's elaboration of the semiotic chora defines a: "non-expressive totality formed by the drives and their stasis in mobility" and is connected to the pre-linguistic realm of the drive and the unconscious (Kristeva, 1984: 25). The semiotic chora describes a matrix of a non-discursive and unconscious field of forces and difference that fall outside signification. Her work on the semiotic and the semiotic chora shares many similarities with both Lyotard (in particular) and Deleuze's accounts of affect. In this chapter I draw from her work a definition of the semiotic that corresponds to the definition of affect that we have seen in the other two chapters. I argue that the semiotic defines a non-linguistic element within an image or

representation that operates autonomously to, yet alongside, signification in a productive relationship that incites creativity (artwork) as well as linguistic practices. It is significant to stress that her notion of the semiotic is therefore two-fold; it is both an index and a process.

In this chapter, I view Kristeva's theory of the semiotic as an aesthetic theory that addresses the processes that underlie artistic production. I will be dealing primarily with *Revolution in Poetic Language,* which is Kristeva's most complete and comprehensive account of the semiotic; as well as her 1980's trilogy, *Powers of Horror* (1982), *Tales of Love* (1987) and *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1989). In my reading of these works, the notion of the semiotic and the semiotic chora (as index and as process) is analogous to the Freudian trajectory of affect theory (that Lyotard also develops). If the semiotic aligns with affect, it is precisely because it is viewed as both a violence (and a destabilisation) of language and the subject, as well as a type of judgment (contra Lacan) that is non-representational. The semiotic chora in my reading is analogous to the figural and affect as process, in that it describes a matrix of a non-discursive and unconscious field of forces and difference that operate outside signification. It is a pre-Oedipal and pre-symbolic space (that does not belong to a particular space or subject) but is what informs all relations, as it is related to the primordial relation to the mother. The semiotic chora is established as a *process* that explains unconscious affective processes in the field of vision (the image). As already mentioned, for the three writers discussed in this thesis, all place the image on the side of affect rather than language. The image is developed as the site of affect and the space where affect is produced. The notions of loss, love and abjection in the work of the 1980s illustrate these unconscious processes as experiences that involve psycho-analysis and art. If Kristeva's notion of the semiotic aligns with affect (as a type of

judgment) it is because it is constituted in depth. This depth relates to a phenomenological strand in Kristeva's work that she opposes to both Husserl and the structuralist view of subjectivity. I will be tracing this aspect of her thought through her discussion of Freudian dream theory and the concept of negativity in Hegel.

Throughout her writing, Kristeva is interested in the invisible forces that move and incite the subject to speak; the notions of the semiotic and love more specifically play a central role in this account. In *Tales of Love* (1984), she takes the figure of Narcissus (the lover) from psychoanalysis (as her subject in crisis) that serves to explain the intricate movements involved in the affective process. Kristeva, as we shall see, views psychoanalysis as a discourse of love and as a practise that renders visible the underlying processes that are involved in subjective and discursive renewal. She argues that, "Analytic speech is a discourse of love. It has qualities from which its efficacy derives; the same qualities reveal essential (but not very obvious) laws common to all speech acts." (Kristeva, 1987b: 4) According to Kristeva, it is psychoanalysis, along with literature, that reveals the unconscious processes of affect, hence for her, psychoanalysis is a creative process like literature. Psychoanalysis reveals through its experiential dimension that underneath artistic creation is love, loss and abjection. These phenomena exhibit the historical crises of subjectivity and meaning, and reveal the affective processes of the semiotic chora, whereas literature, illustrates the unconscious processes involved in writing-reading (or signifiance).

In *Tales of Love*, Kristeva presents an archaeology of the images of love in Western art, but also pays particular attention to love in its Christian elaborations as *agape* (as to opposed to *eros*). Whereas Lyotard and Deleuze posit the figural (in the guise of the figure-matrix and the "body without organs") as a libidinal space opened up by the force of desire, Kristeva views love (*agape*) and not desire (*eros*), as the force of

the semiotic chora and as the organising principle of the unconscious, the drive, and affect. She argues that, language is informed by desire (*eros*) while, the semiotic is organised by love (*agape*). Love does not replace the dialectic of eros since its tendency is towards fusion instead of dialectic. She reconfigures these notions through psychoanalytic theory, and in particular through the figures of metaphor and metonymy. Whereas metonymic flight is regulated by desire (that emphasises lack), metaphor and the semiotic, with its constitutive leap (transgression), is mobilised and organised by primary identification and love (see later). This forms the process that is creative of artworks and is the reason why she addresses and discusses works of art and literature *as tales of love*, "the *literature of abjection*, or *works of mourning*" (Beardworth, 2004: 16) My argument rests on an alignment between the semiotic and the affective register. We will see in what follows how the semiotic, and thus for me the affective domain, is articulated in Kristeva's work with the question of love.

I Affect and Language (Revolution in Poetic Language)

Kristeva's approach to the affective realm acquires its most salient expression in the key notion of the semiotic. In this section I want to emphasise the aspect of her thought, which establishes, in my view, a significant relationship between affect and language. In *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974), Kristeva reconceives language as a heterogeneous system, developing her argument through the notions of the semiotic, the symbolic, and the semiotic chora. The symbolic and the semiotic are determined as two autonomous realms or modalities that form a dialectical relationship within language.[1]

[1] It is significant to note that I take her use of the term "dialectic" to derive from Hegel and his theory of negativity (that she reads with and against Freudian negation). I will be discussing this in detail in section II of this chapter. Kristeva's relationship to Hegel has been a divisive point among her readers. My own view coincides with that of Jere Paul Serber who claims in *Hegel and Language* (2006): "The Hegelian dialectic forms an 'infinite spiral' rather than a closed system. In spite of the objections of many

She argues that the symbolic and the semiotic "designate two modalities of what is, for us, the same signifying process. […] These two modalities are inseparable from the signifying system that constitutes language, and the dialectic between them determines the type of discourse (narrative, metalanguage, theory, poetry, etc.) involved" (Kristeva, 1984: 24) The symbolic represents the part of language that is communicative and issues from social, cultural, syntactical and other grammatical constraints that ensure communication.[2] In contrast, the semiotic relates to what she names "poetic language" or discourse. The semiotic is a non-signifying element within language that operates alongside the symbolic but is independent of it. It is neither visible, nor audible and does not signify in the same way. Kristeva conceives the semiotic as a resistance within language that does violence to the symbolic, and simultaneously disrupts subjective processes, thereby displacing both language and the subject. What is important here is the nature of this violence or displacement that becomes the catalyst for an entire process. I will come back to this in further detail below. According to Kristeva then meaning is constituted in a dialectical tension between the symbolic and semiotic modalities. Kristeva (like Lyotard and Deleuze) redefines the theory of language as a heterogeneous system that is doubly constituted.

Kristeva's account of Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of language (as seen in chapter one) is markedly different from structuralist readings. In the opening paragraph of *Revolution in Poetic Language*, she argues that, "Our philosophies of language, embodiments of the Idea, are nothing more than the thoughts of archivists,

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twentieth-century philosophers to Hegel's totalization, he has been crucial to the thinking of many of his most outspoken critics. Among these is Julia Kristeva, who has used the Hegelian dialectic, including Hegel's concept of negativity, in the formation of her own non-totalising language theory. Negativity, Kristeva argues, creates a perpetual movement of language and meaning that reflects the formation and continual transformation of the speaking subject. […] Negativity for Kristeva results in poetic language and in the continuing transformation of both the speaking subject and the social system of which the subject is a part of." (Serber, 2006: 219/221) I will come back to this in further detail below.

[2] It corresponds with what Lyotard calls signification and Saussure's theory of *langue*.

archaeologists, and necrophiliacs. Fascinated by the remains of a process which is partly discursive, they substitute the fetish for what actually produced it" (Kristeva, 1984: 13). She argues that, contemporary linguistic theories have reduced language to a realm of static and disembodied objects and claims that what they take as their object of study is merely the remains of a process that has already occurred. In other words, the signification and meaning produced by the symbolic is but one part of an entire process that is only partly discursive. Her contention in this book is precisely to explore the larger part of this process, that is, what comes before signification and is non-linguistic and non-visible to consciousness. She views the structuralist account of language as something barren and lifeless, rather than something living that participates in a process involving the experience of a moving and feeling body. Whereas the structuralist account of the subject focuses on the subject as ego or "I" that is constructed by and through language, she claims instead that this is merely a moment within a larger process that has already occurred prior to conscious realisation. Her notion of the subject-in-process emphasises instead the larger relational process that is pre-oedipal (pre-linguistic) and unconscious. In arguing that the fragmented codes of meaning produced consciously in language (that structuralism deals with) are nothing but the "remains" of a process that has already happened, Kristeva opens up the field of linguistics to the open space of phenomenology and psychoanalysis (like Lyotard). Kristeva claims that these same theories reduce the subject to a purely epistemic position and disassociate it from lived experience, as well as its own material and socio-historical positioning. Rather, the process of becoming that her notion of the subject-in-process entails can be explored through the (inner) workings of the *subject of enunciation*.[3]

[3] The *subject of enunciation* is a term that Kristeva borrows from Emile Benveniste and Edmund

Kristeva turns to Emile Benveniste, who, extending the work of Saussure on the role of the subject, distinguishes between "the subject of enunciation" and "the subject of utterance". In appropriating these terms and differentiating between the two, Kristeva is able to distinguish between the speaking subject (the symbolic subject) and the affective process that allows for this subject to emerge, change and become.[4] She claims that, in positing a subject of enunciation Bienveniste places, "modal relations, relations of presupposition, and other relations between interlocutors within the speech act, in a very deep 'deep structure' […] taking into account the subject of enunciation, which always proves to be a phenomenological subject" (Kristeva, 1984: 22-3). What interests me in this chapter is to explore the phenomenological aspect in Kristeva's thought. She claims that Husserl's phenomenological theory (of meaning) is consistent with the symbolic. In contrast, the psychoanalytic theory of meaning is consistent with what she calls the semiotic. She associates the subject of enunciation with a phenomenological depth that aligns the semiotic with Lyotard's affect theory in *Discourse, Figure* that he derives from a reading of Freud's unconscious affect as process (see later). The subject of enunciation relates to text or poetic discourse, whereas the subject of the utterance relates to signification. Discourse relates to oral or narrative structures (real or fictional) that refer to *how* things are said, that is, their expression. It involves the activity of remembering or recounting events by a phenomenological subject. The process that she proposes, is an attempt to reintroduce in language an experiential subject, albeit different from the intentional subject or the transcendental ego in Husserl's

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Husserl's phenomenology. She states: "The subject of enunciation which comes directly from Husserl and Benveniste introduces, through categorical intuition, both *semantic fields* and *logical* – but also *intersubjective* – *relations*, which prove to be both intra- and trans- linguistic." (Kristeva, 1984: 23)

[4] She argues that, although structuralism rehabilitates the notion of a fragmented body "pre-Oedipal but always already invested with semiosis – these linguistic theories fail to articulate *its transitional link* to the post-Oedipal subject and his always symbolic and/or syntactic language." (Kristeva, 1984: 22)

phenomenology.[5] What concerns Kristeva in *Revolution in Poetic Language* is to account for the (visual) affective processes that take place prior to (language) but incite the subject to speak. It is this emphasis on the affective process in *Revolution in Poetic Language* that she develops through her notion of the semiotic that brings together the work of Kristeva, Lyotard and Deleuze. In what follows, I will be considering her notion of the semiotic (as index) that I propose aligns with the affect-event put forward by Lyotard and Deleuze in the previous two chapters.

The Semiotic as Index

Writing, according to Kristeva, is the fragmented totality of narrated events and even the subject who constructs himself through language is a fragmented subject. Language is neither simply denotative, since words do not refer to static (and ready-made) objects, nor can it simply be "used" by individuals that are detached, pre-linguistic subjects. She argues that: "Because a subject is always *both* symbolic *and* semiotic, no signifying system he produces can be either 'exclusively' semiotic or 'exclusively' symbolic, and is instead necessarily marked by an indebtedness to both." (Kristeva, 1984: 24; emphasis in original) She claims that all writing is neither the one nor the other, but always both like the subject that produces it. The subject is indebted to both modalities because meaning is created through a semiotic discharge or energy in the symbolic that gives shape to symbolic form that at the same time gives (referential)

[5] Linking Kristeva to phenomenology may appear "puzzling" as Titottama Rajan puts it, however it is only so if what we understand by phenomenology is Husserl's idealism that Kristeva identifies with the transcendental ego. (Rajan, 1993: 216) However, by distinguishing between "transcendental (Husserlian) phenomenology" and "existential phenomenology" we can arrive at a different view of Kristeva's work. Rajan states, that "The latter [existential phenomenology] studies affective states such as nausea or cognitive processes like perception and signification, not in purely formal terms but as modes of being in the world that involve the indetermination of subject and object." (Rajan, 1993: 216) This is the sort of phenomenology that appears to interest (in my view) both Kristeva and Lyotard as well as what links their work and why I align the notion of the semiotic with affect. I will be viewing this in more detail later.

meaning to the semiotic. The conditions by which meaning and production can take place relies on the distinction between the symbolic and the semiotic.

Kristeva in *Revolution in Poetic Language* reconceptualises language as a heterogeneity and has much in common with Lyotard and Deleuze's work in this area. Language consists of both a symbolic function that involves communicative language and upholds the (subject/object) poles of articulation and a semiotic function that is, in contrast, the silent and non-linguistic aspect of language that is both "outside of" and "prior to" the signifying system. The latter represents an excessive demand of affective corporeal existence that indicates itself as language's expressive function; rhythms and tones that are made visible in poetry and music illustrate the affective dimension that is present in all language. She claims that the semiotic is what operates beneath the surface of signification and breaks through or ruptures the symbolic as tone, gesture and rhythm, creating a "wound" or "tear" in its fabric.[6] The semiotic belongs to the pre-linguistic, pre-Oedipal order of the drive that she argues functions beneath discourse (autonomously), as a productive violence, and that in rupturing the symbolic, meddles with understanding. She claims that, "We understand the term 'semiotic' in its Greek sense: *semeion* [is] as distinctive mark, trace, index, precursory sign, proof, engraved or written sign, imprint, trace figuration." (Kristeva, 1984: 25) According to Kristeva, the preponderant etymological use of the "semiotic" that implies "distinctiveness" or *difference* allows her to connect it to a precise modality in the production of the signifying process, which she names the semiotic "chora". In what follows, I turn to the temporality of the semiotic that she derives from Freud and develops in a similar way to Lyotard.

[6] Her theory of the semiotic therefore, like Lyotard's, implies a depth; it comes from within the symbolic and yet is also outside it. In this sense, both Lyotard and Kristeva differ from Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on pure immanence. In fact, as we shall see, this "depth" that both Kristeva and Lyotard implement in their work arrives from a reading of Freud's dream-work that I will be viewing later in this chapter.

Kristeva understands the semiotic as something that can only ever be realised (or recovered) in consciousness belatedly. Like Lyotard who formulates the "inhuman" to include the child as *in-fans* (before speech), Kristeva evokes an affective realm of communication that comes from the body and one which indicates a difference between child and adult.[7] Freud's notion of *Nachträglichkeit*, as we have seen in chapter two, refers to two different temporalities (or two traumatic events) that relate to two different directions (movements). According to Freud, the infant lacks the qualities that we associate with the human (like language) and therefore the infant is inhuman because s/he is born too soon. This temporal dimension in Freud's notion of the infant relates to at least two different aspects of time. The first dimension relates to: "the experience of the outside world, which is linked to perception and to what he calls the system of consciousness" (Laplanche, 2001: 134). This refers to a biological aspect of time and is tied to an immediate temporality. However, there is another aspect to this term that Laplanche argues, "is something much more connected with the whole of life. That is another type of temporality. It is the temporality of retranslating one's own fate, of retranslating what's coming to this fate from the message of the other." (Laplanche, 2001: 11) The term "afterwardsness" relates to two different movements (two different directions). Laplanche writes that, "The phrase 'deferred action' describes one direction, and the phrase 'after the event' describes the other direction." (Laplanche, 2001: 13) According to Laplanche the original (full) sense of the term in Freud was not preserved, and that the two movements depict a deterministic theory. Whereas, the first (trauma) event determines the second (trauma) event and is a hermeneutic theory, the second event "projects retroactively, what came before." (Laplanche, 2001: 14) In Lyotard

[7] This is taken from Freud's notion of "afterwardness" that describes "a mode of belated understanding or retroactive attribution of sexual or traumatic meaning to earlier events [from the German Nachträglichkeit], translated as deferred action, retroaction, après coup, afterwardness." (Lauretis, 2008: 118) Adam Philips writes, "In one sense, Freud's theory of deferred action can be simply stated: memory is repressed which has only become a trauma *after the event*." (Phillips, 1994: 33)

these movements and temporalities are linked to his theory of perception and phenomenology that he relates to unconscious affect. As we have seen, the first trauma (offence) relates to the figure-image (displacement) and the second trauma to the figure-form (condensation). These different modalities of affect form an unconscious thought process that involves an act of interpretation prior to the emergence of language. This affective process is therefore thought to be what produces linguistic structures and cognitive thought processes. All three writers in this thesis have parallel concepts to the one described here. For Kristeva, the first movement referring to displacement is what she names a destabilisation, and the second to a stabilisation. However, it is important to note that for Lyotard, as for Kristeva, this "stabilisation" within language is not merely a return within language but an inscription of the semiotic within language (see later). Deleuze, as we have seen in chapter three, names these movements' deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. Although Deleuze views these movements as immediate and simultaneous to one another, Kristeva and Lyotard's psychoanalytic use of the term emphasises the notion of transgression.[8] I will take a look at these differences in more detail shortly. First, I return to Kristeva's discussion of the infant and her notion of writing in relation to the notion of "belatedness" that, as we have seen, relates to the affect as index within language.

[8] It is perhaps worth mentioning that later on in this chapter I will be considering these movements more closely in relation to Kristeva's concepts of love, loss and abjection. I view her work in the 1980s as relating to the process of unconscious affect or, the semiotic chora, similar to what Lyotard has called: the figure-matrix, the figure-image and the figure-form. Loss corresponds to the figure-image and relates to displacement. I align love to the figure-matrix - the semiotic chora's force and its organising principle. The notion of abjection corresponds with the figure-form and relates to what she calls in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, a second-degree thetic (and refers to the affect-index). In the process of writing the semiotic (or affect) becomes retroactively (and unconsciously) deposited within language in a condensed form. She states that, "The subject must be firmly posited by castration so that drive attacks against the thetic will not give way to fantasy or to psychosis but will instead lead to a 'second-degree thetic', i.e., a resumption of the semiotic *chora* within the signifying device of language. This is precisely what artistic practices, and notably poetic language, demonstrate." (Kristeva, 1984: 50)

In a similar manner to Lyotard then, Kristeva returns to Freud's pre-Oedipal phase of subjective diachrony, and gives prominence to the notion of the infant and its role in the semiotic. The semiotic (like affect) remains in operation beyond the confines of linear (linguistic) temporality. Writing bears witness to the fragments produced by an affective unconscious process (in retrospect), and exposes them as exceeding signifying structures as well as the subject. She emphasises poetic discourse as what reveals the processes of the semiotic chora. She states that:

> […] in the history of signifying systems and notably that of the arts, religion, and rites, there emerge, in retrospect fragmentary phenomena which have been kept in the background or rapidly integrated into more communal signifying systems but point to the very process of signifiance. Magic, shamanism, esoterism, the carnival, and "incomprehensible" poetry all underscore the limits of socially useful discourse and attest to what it represses: the process that exceeds the subject and his communicative structures (Kristeva, 1984: 16; my emphasis).

Discourse according to Kristeva is not only a mere disposition of thin linguistic layers, an archive of structures, or even a testimony of a withdrawn body. Rather, discourse is an essential element of a process (or an archaic organisation) that involves, "the sum of unconscious, subjective, and social relations in gestures of confrontation and appropriation, destruction and construction – productive violence, in short – it is 'literature,' or, more specifically the *text*." (Kristeva, 1984: 16) It is to this extent that she argues that the text is analogous to political revolution. The text cannot be transformed without transforming the self or subject (that is caught up in the act of writing) that in turn will have an effect on the social and political realm.[9] The text is a revolutionary practise that instigates the new by displacing the old, in the same way that a political revolution requires a change in consciousness in order to bring about change.

[9] The significance of the term revolution for Kristeva is that it designates: "a permanent questioning" in its Sanskrit root; but it also means "to discover, open, but also to turn, to return" and exhibits a clear "potential for making gaps, rupturing, renewing," (Kristeva, 2002: 100/85) Revolution is for Kristeva what incites intimate self-questioning and an anxious sense of negation or annihilation of that self, while it also describes a discovery of, or return to, the self and a renewal that operates as a psychological and ontological precondition for engagement with others.

For Kristeva then, the one is analogous to the other inasmuch as one topples into the other. As dialectical constructs, the semiotic and the symbolic represent two systems that can both be transposed into the other in the process of signification.

For Kristeva the subject is therefore absent in the process of writing, and rather than origin of the process, is itself a limit or boundary that is transgressed. She writes: "The semiotic is thus a modality of the signifying process with an eye to the subject posited (but posited as absent) by the symbolic." (Kristeva, 1984: 41) She argues that the positing of the object always involves the drives that continually transgress the boundaries that constitute discourse. The thetic phase (analogous to Lacan's imaginary order) is the moment when the object is bracketed and separated from the subject. She states that such bracketing of meaning and scission of the object-subject relation is never fully accomplished, since every proposition encompasses the relation of an object in the sense of a human other. This other is difference itself, making itself known only as an excess or trace in signification. This is what she means by the semiotic as index, and that involves a larger process that she names the semiotic chora. In establishing a sphere that is anterior to the symbolic both temporally and spatially, the pre-Oedipal subject of the semiotic challenges the Lacanian theory of the subject that places itself under the constraints of the law and the Oedipal structure.[10] Rather, the subject of the semiotic resists such law and structure. In Kristeva's dialectics, the linguistic order is dominated by the semiotic, a pre-symbolic and pre-Oedipal order, which constitutes a retroactive logic where the symbolic becomes instituted belatedly. For Kristeva, the subject is retroactively constructed through language and art practices, through literature, or visual arts like painting.

[10] As mentioned previously, this corresponds to a particular reading of Lacanian subjectivity.

Although the semiotic chora is not cast under the symbolic law it is nonetheless cast under a regulating process. As we shall see, the organising principle of the semiotic chora is love (agape). Kristeva argues that,

> Drives involve pre-Oedipal semiotic functions and energy discharges that connect and orient the body to the mother. We must emphasise that "drives" are always already ambiguous, simultaneously assimilating and destructive… The oral and anal drives, both of which are oriented and structured around the mother's body, dominate this sensorimotor organisation. The mother's body is therefore what mediates the symbolic law organizing social relations and becomes the ordering principle of the semiotic chora (Kristeva, 1984: 27).

The chora, then, produces not a subject of law, but a subject-in-process (or on trial). Kristeva writes: "What we are asking is: How did this consciousness manage to posit itself? Our concern, therefore, is not the operating and producing consciousness, but rather the producible consciousness." (Kristeva, 1984: 242 n.36) Kristeva's interest in the subject shifts the theoretical focus from the problem of the "I" in language, to the more complicated problem of the process of what produces this "I". This entails a discussion on the semiotic chora as an unconscious process and the key notion of the drive. First, it is worth mentioning briefly what, in my view, links the semiotic with Freudian affect.

In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, the psychoanalytic concept of the drive is pivotal to explaining the nature of semiotic functioning. As Kelly Oliver observes, "Since her earliest writings, Julia Kristeva has attempted to bring the semiotic body, replete with drives back into structuralism." (Oliver, 1998: 55) Kristeva associates the semiotic with the pre-Oedipal, pre-linguistic order of the drives that Freud, as we have seen in chapter one, associates with unconscious affect that he defines as two-fold. I propose here that in reading Kristeva's early work alongside Lyotard's affect theory in *Discourse, Figure* a different picture of her work on the semiotic can emerge; one that is less Lacanian and more Freudian. In my reading Kristeva's semiotic and semiotic chora

are analogous to Freud's theory of affect that he develops as both a (relatively stable) indicator in language and as a process (that is fluid). Kristeva states that, "the drives, which are energy charges as well as 'psychic marks', articulate what we call the chora: a non-expressive totality formed by the drives and their stasis in motility that is full of movement as it is regulated." (Kristeva, 1984: 25) What interests me here is the nature of this distinction between: "energy charges and psychic marks". According to Sara Beardsworth,

> The drive, for her, is the corporeal inscription of the symbolic that is not only prior to the appearance of linguistic capacities or object-relation. It is also distinct from the effects of language that, on the Lacanian view, make the subject the material of the structure of language. […] It might be called natural so long as this is understood, not as the Other of the symbolic field, but as the 'not yet symbolized'. Assuming the entrance into language, semiotic functioning is an excess of symbolic functioning, and heterogeneous to it (Beardsworth, 2004: 42).

Beardsworth's distinction between the semiotics' "corporeal inscription" of the symbolic and the "not yet symbolized" stresses the symbolic in both characterisations. In my reading the semiotic (index) relates to the encounter of affect within language and writing, and corresponds to what Lyotard calls the affect-event. However, what she refers to as the "not yet symbolized"- that relates to the semiotic chora- is what I view as the equivalent to what Lyotard names the figural or, differend, that stems from Freud's theory of affect as process. This later notion involves issues of perception and a phenomenological argument that I will return to in section three of this chapter. However, it is significant to note here the difference between Freud's affect (as index) and Lacan's *petit objet a*, that is the trace of the real in the symbolic. Whereas Lacan's *petit objet a*, the excess in language and object cause of desire is: "objectively nothing, although it assumes the shape of something." (Johnson. 2007: 76) Freud illustrates that affect is meaningful (yet non-referential) in itself. Affect is a minimal signal of pleasure and/or pain that is sensed as a type of judgment (a predominantly negative one).

Kristeva herself points this out and distinguishes between their respective positions. She argues that,

> […] the semiotic […] corresponds to phenomena that for Lacan are in both the real and the imaginary. For him the real is a hole, a void, but I think that in a number of experiences with which psychoanalysis is concerned – most notable, the narcissistic structure, the experience of melancholia or of catastrophic suffering and so on – the appearance of the real is not necessarily a void. It is accompanied by a number of psychic inscriptions that are of the order of the semiotic. Thus perhaps the notion of the semiotic allows us to speak of the real without implying that it is an emptiness or a blank; it allows us to try to further elaborate it (Guberman, 1996: 22-23).

For Kristeva, the semiotic is neither an emptiness nor simply a void, but a type of judgment that is encountered as meaningful. If the semiotic does violence to the symbolic and the subject of language it is because this phenomenological subject encounters something that resists the current position that s/he holds in linguistic structures. The semiotic therefore corresponds to affect in that it functions beneath discourse as a material order of the drives or, as "energy charges" that, in rupturing the symbolic, meddles with understanding because it is a form of negative judgment that takes place prior to conscious thought. This displacement becomes a catalyst for the semiotic process that incites and engenders linguistic and subjective structures. The process of interpretation that the semiotic concerns is not linguistic but affective and shows that what emerges in consciousness has already been through a process of (internal) interpretation. Kristeva's discussion of Hegel's negativity and Freud's negation illustrates this point, as does her work on Freudian dream-theory that I will be discussing later. First, I turn to her notion of the semiotic chora and the critical notion of the drive.

I The Semiotic Chora: Affect as process

In *Revolution in Poetic Language,* Kristeva borrows the term *chora* from Plato's *Timaeus* and reinterprets it through psychoanalysis. What interests her here is that Plato associates it with the visual order.[11] The semiotic chora in Kristeva is an affective, visual space that deals with the order of images prior to their entry into the symbolic realm. She claims:

> We borrow the term chora from Plato's Timaeus to denote an essentially mobile and extremely provisional articulation constituted by movements and their ephemeral stases. […] This modality is the one Freudian psychoanalysis points to in postulating not only the facilitation and the structuring disposition of drives, but also the primary processes which displace and condense both energies and their inscription (Kristeva, 1984: 25).

The chora, like Lyotard's figural, is not a concept but a process in flux. It is characterised by an "openness" that is constituted primarily by movement and its brief stases. She argues that the chora is not yet a position that represents *something* for *someone* (a sign); nor is it a position that represents someone for another position (it is not yet a signifier). The semiotic chora is independent of, and prior to, language. However, it cannot be viewed as an origin either: "Neither model nor copy, the *chora* precedes and underlies figuration and thus specularization, and is analogous only to vocal or kinetic rhythm. We must restore this motility's gestural and vocal play (to mention only the aspect relevant to language) on the level of the socialised body in order to remove motility from ontology". (Kristeva, 1984: 26) The semiotic chora, to put it simply, is a type of (non) space that is not only prior to language, but also cannot

[11] Plato's *khora* in *Timaeus* denotes a receptacle, space or interval that he argues is neither being nor non-being but an interval between, where the "forms" were originally held. Forms (with a capital F) in Plato correspond to ideas. His notion of form precedes the manifest language, and is linked with the following terms: eidos, phenomena and morphe, showing that it is predominantly associated with vision. The words eidos (kind) and idea share the same Latin root word "weid" that means "see"; morphe is related to "shape", and phenomena means "appearance" and is derived from "phaino" meaning "shine" as well as "reveal". The khora in Plato is the territory of the Ancient Greek "polis" outside the city proper. As a term it designates a receptacle (a kind of non-space) that is outside the polis proper. For Kristeva, the semiotic chora is a pre-linguistic realm (or pre-signifying state) that forms a process that deals with the visual register.

be reduced to a mere specularization (representation or mimesis), and is therefore prior to Lacan's imaginary order.[12] It is a modality of signifiance in which the linguistic sign has not yet been articulated as the absence of an object and as the distinction between the real and symbolic.[13] The semiotic chora is an unconscious process that relates to the drive. The drive in Freud describes a psycho-somatic process or, what Teresa De Lauretis calls a "no-man's land" or "buffer zone" between the mental and the physical. She states that, "the concept of the drive is precisely what undoes the categorical distinction between body and mind." (Lauretis, 2008: 45) As we have seen in chapter one, what the history of affect theory shows is that the notion of affect links to, rather than separates, between the body and the mind, since it is prior to the separation created in the mirror stage by language.

According to Sara Beardsworth, for Kristeva, the drive is predominantly considered an instinctual motion and a primitive registering of a confrontation with the symbolic by a preverbal being that is dependent on an other – the mother. For Beardsworth, the semiotic chora should not be read too closely with the mother's body, but instead, through the relationship between mother and child. She argues in *Julia Kristeva: Psychoanalysis and Modernity* (2004) that,

> […] insofar as the semiotic centrally concerns the mother's body, this is no presymbolic body. […] the infans challenges a tendency in the critical reception of her thought to

[12] Lacan defines the imaginary order as one of the three orders that structure the psyche, described as a stage in psychosexual development and is the order of images. As Dylan Evans notes however, it cannot be viewed as merely 'illusory' and inconsequential since it has powerful effects in the real. He argues: "The basis for the imaginary order continues to be the formation of the ego in the mirror stage. Since the ego is formed by identifying with the counterpart or specular image, identification is an important aspect of the imaginary order. […] The relationship whereby the ego is constituted by identification with the little other means that the ego and the imaginary order itself, are both sides of a radical alienation; 'alienation is constitutive of the imaginary order' (S3, 146) […] The imaginary order is thus the order of surface appearances which are deceptive, observable phenomena which hide underlying structure; the affects are such phenomena." (Evans, 1996: 37)

[13] Kristeva claims that: "Signifiance refers to the semantic operations that are both fluid and archaic – with the latter word restricted to its Freudian sense. It refers to the work performed in language that enables a text to signify what representative and communicative speech does not say." (Kristeva, 1984: 263) *Signifiance* is the dimension of expression within language that reveals itself through writing practices.

> identify the semiotic chora too closely with the mother's body. […] Drive theory works to articulate preverbal capacities to struggle with an unmasterable otherness that is not (yet) 'outside' (Beardsworth, 2004: 45)

According to Beardsworth, the notion of the *infans* challenges the tendency to read Kristeva's semiotic chora too closely with the mother's body, since what the mother's body, as the mediator of the symbolic depicts, is the corporeal "exchange between the mother and the child" that "conveys social and familial imperatives to the body of a subject, where neither the body nor the subject is constituted as such." (Bearsworth, 2004: 45-6) She argues that the source of the drive is neither the natural body of the mother, nor the natural organs of the infant. Rather, the drive works to express and articulate what she calls "preverbal capacities" that she views as the struggle, "with the impact of the symbolic on the part of a being that is not inscribed in the symbolic register." (Beardsworth, 2004: 45) She argues that the dominant logic of the drive therefore, is to articulate and express these "preverbal capacities" that she associates with the struggle of not having acquired the symbolic yet. The drive in this way, attempts to articulate the transition from the most basic moment of "symbolic impact to the emergence of the sign itself." (Beardsworth, 2004: 45) In my view, Beardsworth's reading of the semiotic chora and the drive is dependent on the fact the she (problematically) replaces the word infant with the word child. In doing so she ascribes to the pre-Oedipal order of the drive and to the notion of the infant, a separation between body and mind. Here, the (pre-symbolic) child is caught in a struggle with the symbolic; "struggle", implying that the child is consciously aware of its own lack. This is a position that cannot be applied in the same way to the infant. In my reading, the mother's body can be thought of as a metaphor for the archaic and pre-Oedipal process that Kristeva calls the semiotic chora. This involves a primary identification with what is, "not an object, but with what offers itself as a *model*" that she associates with love

(agape) (see later). (Kristeva, 1987: 25) As previously acknowledged, in Lyotard's account of primary identification in relation to affect, Freud objects to Rank's notion of birth trauma since he argues that the mother's womb is not in fact an object.[14] The model for Kristeva, as we shall see in the section on love, is an unconscious identification with an affective image (prior to symbolic impact). Love (agape) opens up the space of the semiotic chora, and the identification that takes place is prior to representation, although this identification cannot simply be viewed as empty or meaningless. The connection that Kristeva makes between Plato's chora and the psychoanalytic notion of the drive is instructive on this point.

For Plato, the chora is the third principle that lies between matter and the idea. The chora is a nourishing receptacle, because it is thought to nourish everything that is created. It lies in the space between the lost original (which is available only for thought) and the visible copy (representation). Cecilia Sjoholm explains that it stands for: "that which is radically heterogeneous in relation to any principle used in dialectical materialism. The chora is the space outside of being because it engenders transformation, mobility, motility, novelty, not a psychic site but a site of investments." (Sjoholm, 2005: 16) It is a container of affects and memories that are not immediately translatable as a body, but rather a temporality where body and image meet (what I call elsewhere an affective bodily image). This is what Sjoholm calls, "the quasi-transcendental condition that makes corporeal meditation possible." (Sjoholm, 2005: 16) Through the semiotic chora, Kristeva attempts to move past the science of (linguistic) signs, and instead explain how the sign is produced. The chora is a type of

[14] Freud in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926) objects to Rank's thesis on birth trauma and claims that: "the infant has received certain sensory impressions, in particular of a visual kind, at the time of birth, the renewal of which can recall to its memory the trauma of birth and thus evoke a reaction of anxiety. This assumption is quite unfounded […] It is not credible that a child should retain any but tactile and general sensations relating to the process of birth." (Weber, 1982: 90)

mediation, which is irreducible to signification, law and its correlative negativity; rather it is what organizes all social relations. According to Kristeva, the chora is in continuous flux, a principle of production and motility rather than stasis. It is what engenders representation, although it cannot itself be represented since it precedes the space of representation. It is a feminine (virtual) space of energies, investments and drives that describes a process associated with the visual order. Images here (as in Lyotard and Deleuze) are emphasised as the site of affect and as what produces affect. I will be coming back to this in further detail below. Whereas the notion of the semiotic (as index) is explained through her notion of discourse (and writing) the semiotic chora explains the processes by which these phenomena come about. The semiotic (affect-index) occupies a space within a representational image and is thus always located within representation. However, the semiotic chora explains the processes of images prior to their entry into language. This involves a sentient and feeling body that, in its interaction with the world around it absorbs and makes judgments that are not always (or at least not entirely) conscious. This is why I consider the semiotic (affect-index) as relating to her notion of writing, while I view the semiotic chora as dealing with issues of (unconscious) perception.

In discussing the thetic phase (which alludes to representation), she explains that semiotic motility is a precondition of the thetic. Kristeva argues that the semiotic displaces both language and the subject, and like Lyotard views affect as a violence that ruptures both language and perception. It is viewed as an unconscious force that opens up the field of meaning and representation to new connections and relations. In *Revolution in Poetic Language* Kristeva claims that:

> […] Freud specifies two fundamental "processes" in the working of the unconscious: displacement and condensation. Kruszewski and Jakobson introduced them, in a different way […] through the concepts of metonymy and metaphor, which have since been interpreted in light of psychoanalysis. To these we must add a third "process" – the

> passage from one sign system to another. To be sure, this process comes about through a combination of displacement and condensation, but this does not account for its total operation. It also involves an alternating of the thetic position – the destruction of the old position and the formation of a new one. (Kristeva, 1984: 59; emphasis in original).

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The two movements involved here are what Kristeva calls "destabilising and stabilising" that link to the notions of displacement/condensation in Freud. In a similar manner to Lyotard, she emphasises the significance of transgression, but she also argues for a concrete inscription of such bodily events within symbolic structures. She argues that to be meaningful, acts of transgression will have to be re-inscribed into the symbolic order. Hence, she too argues that we are indebted to affect, and argues for the importance of bearing witness to it through language. Kristeva argues that literary and artistic creation is: "that adventure of the *body* and *signs* that bear witness to the affect." (Kristeva, 1987: 22) The semiotic chora, like Lyotard's figural, finds its force in its capability of transgressing the intervals that constitute discourse. Lyotard's figural is primarily described as the rupture between text and image. Kristeva also argues in *Revolution in Poetic Language* that:

> […] the thetic [mirror stage/imaginary order] is not exclusive: the semiotic, which also precedes it, constantly tears it open and this transgression brings about all the various transformations of the signifying practice that are called 'creation'. Whether in the realm of metalanguage [mathematics, for example] or literature, what remodels, the symbolic order is always the influx of the semiotic (Kristeva, 1984: 62; my emphasis).

The semiotic exists prior to what Kristeva names "the thetic" and thus belongs to the order that Lacan designates as "the real".[15] She too views the image as split, and separates the elements of the image that escape representation from its signifying qualities, and argues that it is the image that is capable of maintaining affective *difference*. In order to view this in more detail I will turn to her discussion of Freudian

[15] The thetic corresponds to Lacan's Imaginary order. She claims "The thetic originates in the 'mirror stage' and is completed, through the phallic stage, by the reactivation of the Oedipus complex in puberty; no signifying practise can be without it." (Kristeva, 1984: 62)

dream theory and the notion of negation and negativity in both Hegel and Freud. First, I turn to the difference between Kristeva and Lyotard's psychoanalytic conception of affect that entails a return to the pre-Oedipal order of the drive and relates to the notion of transgression, in contrast to Deleuze and Guattari who advocate a more immanent process.

In an exchange with Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* Kristeva both praises Deleuze and Guattari for reconfiguring the unconscious as a de-structuring and a-signifying "machine", but also like Lyotard, critiques their abhorrence for the category of transgression.[16] The notion of the semiotic as violence (and displacement) denotes the transgression of an unconscious affective image or gesture that makes the symbolic stutter and stop (creates breaks). It therefore operates in opposition to the semiotic flow that Deleuze and Guattari insist upon. Transgression is associated with what she names "experience-in-practice". She argues that the encounter with the semiotic is a confrontation with material processes that displace consciousness and lead to the emergence of a new object. These movements entail what Deleuze calls deterritorialisation/reterritorialisation and what she calls "destabilising/stabilising". However, what distinguishes their respective positions is Kristeva's focus on experience as something that connects with human affect as something unknown (a surprise, pain, or delight) and then comprehension of this impact. She thus shares with Lyotard the

[16] Kristeva argues: "Laing and Cooper, like Deleuze and Guattari, are right to stress the de-structuring and a-signifying machine of the unconscious. Compared with the ideologies of communication and normativeness, which largely inspire anthropology and psychoanalysis their approach is liberating. What is readily apparent, however, is that their examples of the 'schizophrenic flow' are usually drawn from modern literature, in which the 'flow' itself exists only through language, appropriating and displacing the signifier to practice within it the heterogeneous generating of the 'desiring-machine'." (Kristeva, 1984: 17) She therefore argues that the semiotic flow that Deleuze and Guattari insist upon is in fact the flow of language, and not of the semiotic. Unconscious affect in Freud (as we have seen in Lyotard) is defined by the breaks it causes within the symbolic.

view that affect may only be recognised as a belated response.[17] It is significant to note that Lyotard and Kristeva's pre-Oedipal account is not the same as Deleuze and Guattari's anti-Oedipal gesture. Kristeva (and Lyotard) return to the pre-Oedipal union with the mother through Freud's notion of the infant. In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari do not reconstitute the *daddy-mommy-me* triangle that for them, as Maria Margaroni puts it, "reduces the 'open social field' to either empty structural positions or 'global persons'." (Margaroni, 2004: 60) Kristeva and Lyotard's emphasis of the pre-Oedipal order in psychoanalysis emphasises the break and transgression involved in the affective process of delayed understanding that denotes a temporality of (and therefore a break between) before and after. Deleuze and Guattari's anti-Oedipal push seeks instead a more immediate and fluid process of affective becoming and does not reintroduce a transcendental quality (that escapes) but rather remains a purely immanent process. As already mentioned in chapter three, Deleuze's notion of immanence is nevertheless (at times) problematic.

This chapter reads the semiotic chora and the pre-Oedipal order of the drive, as linked to a phenomenological strand in Kristeva's work that deals with depth rather than surface phenomena, that links her to Lyotard (and his own reading of Freud). The

[17] Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* respond by arguing that, "It is obvious that there is no system of signs common to all strata, not even in the form of the semiotic "chora' theoretically prior to symbolisation." (Deleuze, 2004: 72) Kristeva's approach differs from Deleuze and Guattari's in several ways. Although she agrees with their descriptions of a productive affective unconscious conceived as an a-signifying machine that: "is precisely this unlimited and unbounded generating process". She will argue in contrast to Deleuze and Lyotard that this is an operation of the drives in connection to love (agape) rather than desire. She claims that this is an effect of, "this uneasing operation of the drives toward, in and through language; toward, in, and through the exchange system" (Kristeva, 1984: 17) Kristeva holds on to the psychoanalytic distinction between desire and drive. Whereas desire is an endless metonymical search for the object (the *petit objet a*) it is also self-reflexive and is by definition insatiable (defined by its lack). This continuous search for the lost object of desire (in its failure) produces a surplus enjoyment, an unconscious resetting of its coordinates and the continuation of its search. The drive, in contrast, achieves enjoyment in precisely failing to grasp its object and is thus an enjoyment of failure. The drive in psychoanalysis liberates the subject and progresses therapy or analysis, by not attaching the subject even more aggressively to domination and exploitation. Instead of reconceptualising desire as productive she argues that the drives and unconscious affect are organised by the principle of love (agape).

notion of negativity is significant here. She claims, "negativity to the extent that it goes deep into itself as possible […] is itself an affirmation." (Kristeva, 1884: 110) Tilottama Rajan's in *Ethics, Politics and Difference* (1993) argues that,

> To locate a phenomenological strand in Kristeva's work seems logical enough, given her interest in affective states like melancholia and love. However an unthematised phenomenological element can be said to exist even in her early work. For one thing her focus on the processes by which structures are engendered is Romantic as well as psychoanalytic and Marxist (Kristeva, 1993: 217).

Rajan rightly observes that there is a phenomenological strand in Kristeva's early work that relates not to "transcendental phenomenology", but to an "existential phenomenology" insofar as she is interested in affective states and the processes that engender linguistic structures. (Rajan, 1993: 216) The phenomenological strand in Kristeva's work will be viewed in relation to negativity and depth, that I have suggested links her with Lyotard. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), Freud addresses the role of primary processes that serve as a framework for the workings of the unconscious mind. Primary process thinking is characteristic of unconscious activity and the visual unstructured logic of the id that is tolerant of contradictions. Kristeva turns to this work, to illustrate (contra Lacan) that the unconscious in Freud is not structured like a language and is therefore non-representational. Similar to Lyotard, she shows that what emerges in conscious thought has already undergone a process of interpretation that is affective and unconscious. The primary processes are treated as analogy of the processes involved in the semiotic chora. These in turn, relate to the processes that creating art entails, which I now turn.

II Art and the Semiotic Chora

Following on from the preceding account of the importance of Kristeva's account of the semiotic I want to now move towards the role of art in her thought as a

whole, again arguing for the dynamic impact of affect, beyond the limits of representation. Kristeva argues that the semiotic chora corresponds to Freud's primary processes. She maintains that: "This modality is the one Freudian psychoanalysis points to in postulating not only the *facilitation* and the structuring *disposition* of drives, but also the so-called *primary processes* which displace and condense both energies and their inscription" (Kristeva, 1984: 25). The primary processes are what Freud uses to explain the energies moving between the realm of the drive and the realm of symbolisation.[18] For Freud, art emerges from neurotic symptoms that develop as a consequence of a conflict that arises between the pleasure and the reality principles. He argues that the unconscious mental processes that are operative in neurosis, dreams, and the creation of works of art function in similar ways. There are four aspects to Freud's dream-work: condensation, displacement, considerations of figurability and secondary revision. What he names 'primary process' thinking is contrasted with mental functioning influenced by external reality that he calls 'secondary process' thinking. Freud's primary processes are a form of 'irrational' thought that is dominated by affect and repression, and has the effect of causing psychic investments to pass from one element to another; the 'irrational' thought (or affective-image) is therefore at odds with rational thought. The artist for him is the person who cannot come to terms with the

[18] Explaining the role of primary and secondary processes in Freud's dream theory, Laplanche and Pontalis claim that Freud distinguishes between two radically different modes of functioning of the psychical apparatus. On the one hand "the *topographical* point of view, in that the primary process is characteristic of the unconscious system, while the secondary process typifies the preconscious – conscious system". And on the other hand, "from the *economico-dynamic* point of view: in the case of the primary process, psychical energy flows freely, passing unhindered, by means of the mechanisms of condensation and displacement, from one idea to another and tending to completely decathect the ideas attached to those satisfying experiences which are at the root of unconscious wishes (primitive hallucination). […] The opposition between primary and secondary processes corresponds to that between the two ways in which psychical energy circulates, according to whether it is 'free"' or 'bound'. It should also be seen as parallel with the contrast between the pleasure principle and the reality principle. Freud's distinction between the primary and secondary processes is contemporaneous with his discovery of the unconscious processes, and it is in fact the first theoretical expression of this discovery. […] In the 'Project' Freud also refers to the primary process as a 'full' or total (*voll*) process" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1988: 69).

renunciation of instinctual satisfaction.[19] Central to Freud's approach to neurosis, daydreaming and creativity was his conviction that in order for an individual to adopt to the demands of external reality, the imaginative processes operative in primary process thinking must be controlled or renounced (rejected). He argues that "thinking must concern itself with the connecting paths between ideas, without being led astray by the intensities of those ideas" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1988: 248). For Freud, the primary process presents a threat to the operations of the secondary process because it is dominated by affect. Freud emphasises the western tendency to favour reason over the expressive and intuitive aspects of psychological life, however, he views in art a 'peculiar' reconciliation between the pleasure and reality principles. This allows him to distinguish the artist from the neurotic. He claims that: "The artist knows how to work over his daydreams in such a way as to make them lose what is too personal about them and repels strangers, and to make it possible for others to share the enjoyment of them. He understands, too, how to tone them down so that they do not easily betray their origin from proscribed sources" (Freud, 1975: 376). The term Freud uses to describe the process by which the vestiges of infantile sexuality are transformed into socially valued forms, like the creation of works of art, is 'sublimation'.[20] The means by which the artist is capable of doing this is for Freud a form of enticement: "by the purely formal […] aesthetic – yield of pleasure which he [the artist] offers us in the presentation of

[19] In "Two Principles of Mental Functioning" Freud states that, "An artist is originally a man who turns away from reality because he cannot come to terms with the renunciation of instinctual satisfying which reality at first demands and who allows his erotic and ambitious wishes full play in the life of phantasy. He finds his way back to reality, however, from this world of phantasy by making use of special gifts to mould his phantasies into truths of a new kind, which are valued by men as precious reflections of reality. Thus, in a certain fashion he actually becomes the hero, the king, the creator, or the favourite he desired to be, without following the long roundabout path of making real alteration in the external world" (Freud, 1975: 244).

[20] Laplanche and Pontalis define 'sublimation' as, "the process postulated by Freud to account for human activities which have no apparent connection with sexuality, but which are assumed to be motivated by the force of the sexual instinct. The main types of activity described by Freud as sublimated are artistic creation and intellectual inquiry" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1988: 431).

phantasies" (Freud, 1975: 153). Freud proposes a twofold hypothesis that corresponds to a dual interpretive system between the purely formal pleasure that is derived from the work's organisation itself and the psychic economy from which it is realised. Kristeva is interested in the later interpretive system (that is in fact anterior) involving the work and processes of the psychic economy and not the product that it produces.

A significant consequence of Freud's approach to art has been to view it as a symptom (as seen in Chapter Two), as the symbolic expression of the neurotic and the conflicted inner world of the artist. Kristeva, like Freud, views primary processes as central to creativity. However, for her, the primary process expression found in 'art' is not only intermixed with 'high levels of thought' but these are also essential to the development of thought itself and of self-organisation. In expressing and inciting 'primitive desire', primary processes unleash psychological processes that disturb and displace, rendering new ways of relating and making us think differently. This view (as we have seen) is shared among all three of the writers that I discuss here. While Freud recognises that the experience of dreaming is predominantly 'visual' he is primarily concerned with translating dream imagery into words. He acknowledges that: 'Part of the difficulty of giving an account of dreams is due to our having to translate these images into words. "I could draw it", a dreamer often says to us, "but I don't know how to say it"' (Freud, 1979: 118). Although Freud admits to a splitting between process and product, images and words, he is more interested in meaning and interpretation. However, unlike Freud, Kristeva is interested in the processes operating behind the art-work (what renders its production possible). She insists on holding on to the rupture between image and word, as well as the process and product distinction. Kristeva takes up Freud's theory of the dream-work and the primary processes, in order to show that the production of signification involves unconscious thought processes (that are non-

representational). Kristeva's approach to the role of sublimation in relation to 'primary process' thinking involves, as we have seen, allocating a significant place to the non-representational and affective register of meaning and experience. It is towards this critique of a notion of the unconscious conceived within the limits of representation that I will now turn.

A Non-Representational Unconscious

Kristeva also turns to Freud in order to respond to Lacan's theory of the unconscious (as structured like a language). In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud argues that the dream is created or produced through what he names its 'work'.[21] She claims that not only is the dream a semiotic system but so is the work behind it. In *Semiotics: A Critical Science and/or a Critique of Science* (1969) she writes that:

> "The dream-work" shows how Freud revealed production itself to be a process not of exchange (or use) or meaning (value), but of playful permutation which provides the very model of production. Freud therefore opens up the problematics of work as a particular semiotic system, as distinct from that of exchange: this work exists within the communicative word but differs essentially from it. On the level of manifestation it is a hieroglyph, while on a latent level it is a dream-thought (Kristeva, 1969: 83).

The dream-work is the operation of the unconscious itself, which is both non-representational and transformative as a process.[22] For Kristeva the dream-work does not operate 'like a language' since Freud had claimed that 'The dream-work "does not think, calculate and judge in any way at all; it restricts itself to giving things a new

[21] In *Kristeva and the Political*, Cecilia Sjoholm states that this is significant for Kristeva because: "The Freudian notion of work refers to a process that can never be reduced to a Marxist theory of values: the elements of the dream have no meaning (or value), but are constituted through a free play of associations. It is thus the theoretical model of the dreamwork that Freud brings into focus, and not the meaning (value) of the dream. In this, Freudian theory offers an important correlative to Marx's version of dialectical materialism" (Sjoholm, 2005: 14).

[22] What she names the 'dream-thought' and the 'hieroglyph' is comparable with what Lyotard calls the figure-image and the figure-form in *Discourse, Figure*. The figure-form (the index) in language indicates a figure-image (a traumatic event) in the visual realm and a repressed process (of interpretation) prior to conscious thought.

form"' (Kristeva, 1969: 84). There are four elements to Freud's non-representational unconscious: displacement, condensation, considerations of representability and secondary elaboration. Each in turn produces, 'the transformation of thoughts into hallucinatory experience' (Freud, 1973: 250). In Freud the manifest content is always smaller than the latent content that precedes it. This is the result of condensation. Condensation compresses several thoughts into one element, image or word, in the following ways: first, by omitting latent content, where only a part of the latent content arrives in the manifest content; second, latent elements with something in common are condensed into composite structures. Displacement is the most important activity for the disfigurement of dreams and is related more specifically to the fate of affects. What Freud calls displacement is the occurrence of latent elements that appear in the manifest content through a chain of association or allusion. The first mechanism of displacement operates a long chain of association in which the manifest content alludes to something in the dream-thought. Here, the affect's intensity is shifted from its source. This he claims, is what allows for less significant aspects of the dream to take a more prominent place, which would otherwise be difficult to explain. What is emphasised in Freud's theory is that the dream is a transcription of latent content, transposing the dream into thought, into manifest content or visual imagery. Kristeva argues that the 'dream-thought' is a type of original text that is transposed onto what Freud called the 'other stage'. The element of visualisation is an important aspect of it since it participates in the formation of the dream. The dream is therefore more like a picture or photograph than a narrative, illustrating that the unconscious (unlike language) is a non-topos and time-less and describes a "pre-representative production, and the development of "thinking" before *thought*" (Kristeva, 1969: 84). Hence, Kristeva finds in Freud's dream-work a non-representational unconscious which 'knows no negation' and is not

subject to representation and language. Since it lacks logical means, the dream prompts a type of syntax which is not its own and thus does not have the same expression, even though it nonetheless requires, indeed, demands, interpretation. Kristeva through Freud distinguishes between the dream-work that is a process and the dream-thought that is a type of thinking before thought. The latter refers to an affective bodily image that involves a phenomenological subject, while the former involves the process of the semiotic chora. She associates the processes of displacement and condensation with her understanding of how artistic processes emerge.

According to Freud, the process of the dream-work that strives towards visualisation is named 'considerations of representability'. This element is in fact a process of displacement that is active behind the imagery of the dream. The aim of this displacement is to render the dream visible. However, the images of the dream are not representations or symbols (with a given referent or meaning) of the dream-thought. Rather, all images result from the continuous process of condensation and displacement of affect. Hence, for Kristeva the interpretation must refer not to its meaning(s) but to its very processes. This is a second level of displacement that occurs in the dream and explains the appearance of fantastic absurdity, in which all dreams are disguised. According to Freud the direction taken by the displacement typically results in a colourless and abstract expression in the dream, where primary thought is exchanged for a secondary pictorial and concrete one. For him, the images of the dream are colourful displacements of the dream-thought that strive towards the visually rich or saturated image. Kristeva, like Lyotard, suggests that striving for saturated visual images is the desire incarnated by art; the image is dense and is that which reveals a difference which is irreducible to linguistic signification. It is because Lyotard and Kristeva follow Freud in his theory of the unconscious and the processes of the dream-work that their affective

theories acquire depth (unlike Deleuze). In *Discourse, Figure*, Lyotard argues that Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* is dominated by a *desire* for the figural. The *Darstellung* (pure presence) dominating the dream process begins and ends in the same opacity in which we find the creation of images in a work of art. These "images work, produce, hide, and reveal, all at the same time" (Lyotard, 1971: 259-60). Lyotard avoids the problem of assigning lack back into language by reconfiguring Lacan's theory of desire (as lack) into a positive and productive force, in a similar manner to Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*. Kristeva, as we have seen, also objects to the Lacanian formulation of the 'unconscious' (structured like a language) but she also deviates from Lacan's view of sublimation. Instead of reconfiguring desire as positive and productive, she leaves it intact (as lack in symbolic structures) and proposes that unconscious affect operates through agape (love). She considers the differences between the two in terms of metaphor and metonymy that I will discuss at a later stage.

According to Kristeva, Lacan reconfigures Freud's dream-work in linguistic terms. He argues that metaphor is a figure of condensation and is the truly creative element of the dream. In contrast, metonymy is the figure of desire and lack that cannot stand on its own, but rather occupies a place in a chain and is a sign for the desire of something else. In Lacan's view the displacing function of the dream is a function of desire. Thus, the dream is always a form of transference.[23] Kristeva's understanding of

[23] According to Dylan Evans, the term "transference" in Freud's work first emerged as another term for the displacement of affect from one idea to another (or from one person to another or, the unconscious redirection of feelings). However, "it later came to refer to the relation between analyst and the patient as it develops in the treatment […] which he argued was due to the patient transferring unconscious ideas onto the doctor […] Freud first regarded the transference exclusively as a *resistance* which impedes the recall of repressed memories, an obstacle to the treatment which must be "destroyed" (Freud, 1905e SE VII, 116). Gradually, however, he modified this view, coming to see the transference also as a positive factor which helps the treatment to progress. The positive value of transference lies in the fact that it provides a way for the analysand's history to be confronted in the immediacy of the present relationship with the analyst; in the way he relates to the analyst, the analysand inevitably repeats earlier relationships with other figures (especially those with the parents)" (Evans, 1996: 85). Hence, transference has a paradoxical nature in Freud since it becomes both an obstacle to the treatment and what drives the treatment forward. Lacan, in 'An intervention on the transference' (1951), describes transference in

transferential displacement highlights the transposition of signs, where *Darstellbarkeit* (translates as figurability or representation) considers representability through the relation between words and images that become mobile and versatile. In contrast to Lacan who views transference as implicit in the speech act which therefore involves an exchange of signs that transform the speaker and listener, Kristeva returns to Freud who argues that the imagery of the dream recreates the dream-thought into something visual.[24] The words in the dream-thought are displaced onto a second stage: the stage of dream-imagery. According to Freud:

> We regard the dream thoughts and the dream content as two representations of the same meaning in two different languages; or to express it better, the dream content appears to us as a translation of the dream thoughts into another form of expression, whose signs and laws of composition we are to learn by comparing the original with the translation (Freud, 2010: 344).

Freud illustrates a mobile relation between word and image where the dimension of textual productivity exceeds the actual images of the dream. For Kristeva, the semiotics of production accentuate the *alterity* of its object in its relation with the representable object of exchange. She claims in *Semiotics: A Critical Science and/or a Critique of Science* that:

> It is the long development of the science of discourse, and of the laws of its permutations and annulments, as well as a long mediation on the principles and limits of the Logos as a model for the system of communication and meaning (value), which has enabled us to create this concept of a 'work' that 'means nothing', and of a silent

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dialectical terms borrowed from Hegel and criticises ego-psychology for defining the transference in terms of affects. He states: "Transference does not refer to any mysterious property of affect, and even, when it reveals itself under the appearance of emotion, it only acquires meaning by virtue of the dialectical moment in which it is produced' (Ec, 225) (Evans, 1996: 85). Transference here manifests itself in the guise of particularly strong affects, such as love and hate, however, it does not consist of such emotions but in the structure of intersubjective relationships. He 'consistently locates the essence of transference in the symbolic and not in the imaginary, although it clearly has imaginary effects. Later on, Lacan will remark that if transference often manifests itself under the appearance of love, it is first and foremost the love of knowledge that is concerned" (Evans, 1996: 85). See Jacques Lacan, 'L'Instance de la lettre dans l'inconscient' (1966).

[24] Lacan argues in *Seminar I:* "In its essence, the efficacious transference which we're considering is quite simply the speech act. Each time a man speaks to another in an authentic and full manner, there is, in the true sense, transference, symbolic transference – something which takes place which changes the nature of the two beings present" (S1, 109) (Evans, 1996: 85).

> production that marks and transforms, while remaining prior to all circular 'speech', to communication, exchange or meaning (Kristeva, 1969: 83).

Hence, Kristeva claims that the unconscious process displaces and condenses, creates new and absurd words that are put together like riddles (or rebuses) and are like secret signs that point towards a meaning that can only be understood in conjunction with the transformation of discourse. She claims that these kinds of production 'will perhaps constitute what has been called a "monumental history" to the extent that it literally becomes the foundation or background in relation to a "cursive", figurative (teleological) history'" (Kristeva, 1969: 85). For Kristeva it is the productivity of the art-work which is at stake here. Any 'literary text' may be envisaged as productivity. What interests her in Freud's descriptions is that the language of the dream arises from an infantile world that resembles the one of the writer in the process of writing. The processes involved in the dream-work illustrate that what incites the artist to engage in creative activity is affect. In fact, all linguistic articulations for Kristeva are an attempt to respond to the demand of an affect that appears to consciousness as a confused idea or, a 'riddle' (a difference) that requires (a secondary) interpretation. In other words, we sense affective images as difference. These are not the same as representational images that are acquired in and by conscious thought processes that involve language. Kristeva understands affective images and the visual order in a similar manner to Lyotard who claims that the visual is an 'anamnesis of the figural'. This is related to what Beardsworth identifies as the 'not yet symbolised' quality of the semiotic mentioned earlier and aligns Kristeva's theory of the semiotic chora with Lyotard's theory of the figural and the semiotic with affect. For both writers, 'bearing witness to the affect' forms an entire process that consists of various stages and levels of interpretation of the affect prior to conscious thought. Affects are therefore not only behind the processes of

creation that, in demanding visibility, motivate linguistic practices and engender linguistic structures but also, the unconscious itself consists of and organises itself in terms of affects rather than language.

In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva claims that the infantile world arises as the remainder or excess in language that has not been articulated in words yet. She follows Freud who argues that the dream is the fulfilment of an infantile wish that attempts to show what cannot be said (in words) because the psychic layers that it is representing originate at a time or age where the self does not posses articulate language. The displacement works towards the creation of images. However, these images mean something only within the context of infantile desire and are visualised through the motility of the primary process. Kristeva reconfigures Freud's analysis of dream theory into her own analysis of poetic language. The 'work' of the dream, the dream-work, becomes the very model of poetic language which is created through semiotic layers (such as prosody, rhythm, figurability, saturating language with affects and a process of transposition *between* signs). She uses Freud's descriptions of 'considerations of representability' to show how poetic language creates meaning. Metaphor and metonymy create a type of meaning that does not relate to a transcendental or symbolic subject. Rather, it is a form of 'transposition' that marks a '*passage from one sign system to another*' (Kristeva, 1984: 59; emphasis in original). For Kristeva, the transposition from one system to another denotes a change in the subject position without it becoming fixed, since the two positions are unstable and stretched into (overlap) one another. Her understanding of language as transposition relates to what she names 'mimetic' language. In *Revolution in Poetic Language* she claims that: 'Poetic mimesis maintains and transgresses thetic unicity by making it undergo a kind of anamnesis, by introducing into the thetic position the stream of the

semiotic drives and making it signify. This telescoping of the symbolic and the semiotic pluralizes signification or denotation' (Kristeva, 1984: 60). Poetic mimesis therefore involves a language expression in which an object is constructed without being represented or reproduced. Through mimetic construction, the dream-thought is activated and appears as a displaced version of something that has not yet been put into words. The primary process is defined by its motility, where the free circulation between words and images allows for infantile affects and impressions to find representability while remaining non-representational.

This is an important step in the trajectory of my argument: the affective or semiotic images that Kristeva describes are neither representations nor representational. Rather, what is important for her is not the signs themselves but rather the way in which they are processed, condensed, displaced and transposed from one system to another. These processes mimic the positing of an object that Kristeva argues is that of the drives. These transpositions are determined and emerge constantly from energies that belong to the site that she calls the semiotic chora, which I discussed earlier. However, the model of transposition that defines the semiotic chora is unthinkable without the psychic investments of a (phenomenological) corporeal and thus affective subject. Therefore, to Freud's theory of dreams (that he views as subversion of representation), Kristeva adds that there is an additional element of affectivity and corporeal sensation to that subversion. In her view, heterogeneity in language is the paradigm of a mimetic transposition that is always an alterity infused with affective enjoyment. Poetic mimesis resists representation without offering any possibility of hegemonising such resistance. The mimetic object which is correlative to the maternal body (the chora) is reproduced (unconsciously) in all signification.

I will return to a discussion of metaphor and metonymy in Kristeva's work in more detail later, when I discuss the issue of love and desire in literature and subjectivity. However, it is important to reiterate that for Kristeva it is literature that is capable of revealing the processes inherent to language and subjectivity. She argues that: 'Literature has always been the most explicit realisation of the signifying subject's condition […] literature moves beyond madness and realism in a leap that maintains both "delirium" and "logic"' (Kristeva, 1984: 82). In a similar manner to Deleuze, she argues that it is literature that exposes the relationship between affect and signification as a complex material unravelling of affective events that give rise to affective becomings, or what she names the 'subject in process'. Like Deleuze and Lyotard, she too makes a clear distinction between different types of writing, in particular between literature (poetic language) and theory. In fact, she describes her own 'writing as a conscious resistance to the "strong post-Heideggerian temptation" of equating theoretical and literary discourse' (Kristeva, 1984: viii). This is because she too argues that poetic language is what incites new images and new affects through metaphor and analogy whereas the more formal writing of theory requires strict adherence to the rules of language of communication. In *How Does One Speak to Literature* (1971) Kristeva takes her notion of writing from Barthes and argues that: 'The practise of writing becomes the edge separating and uniting the subjectivity to which *style* attests – "starting from a sublanguage elaborated where flesh and external reality came together" […] it brings one back to the other, neither subjective individuality nor exterior objectivity' (Kristeva, 1971: 110). Writing for Kristeva is not upheld by the subject of understanding but by a divided subject (even a pluralised subject) that occupies a permutable, multiple and mobile place. Writing as style (or inscription) not only attests to the rupture between language and affect (or the body) but also the rupture within the

subject him or herself. Following Barthes' *Writing Degree Zero* she argues that the heteronomical negativity by which writing operates is always a between space. That is a space *between* naming carried out by the subject of the symbolic and *polynomia*, which is the pluralisation of meaning that occurs when traversing nonsense. She defines *polynomia* as the index, or the ideogram of biological and social orders. She claims that it is a kind of asymbolic memory of the body: 'it is style that represents the heteronomia included in writing. […] "its secret is recollection locked within the body of a writer"' (Kristeva, 1971: 111–12). Thus writing for Kristeva occurs between consciousness and the unconscious body that inscribes itself within the same writing as style. While language, she argues, is the whole of history, literature is on its hither side, "almost beyond it" (Kristeva, 1971: 112). In what follows I will be examining Kristeva's discussion of negativity and negation in Hegel and Freud that I have already suggested plays an important role in correlating the semiotic to affect.

Negativity

Kristeva's account of language and subjectivity involves a significant recourse to the concept of negativity, which I discuss in what follows, seeking thereby to elucidate its role in relation to affect. In *Revolution in Poetic Language* Kristeva's analysis of the semiotic and symbolic distinction and the negativity of their relationship is a reading that she claims derives from Hegel. More specifically, she is interested in Hegel's concept of negativity and its relation to Freud's theory of negation which she calls "rejection".[25] Kristeva's relation to Hegelian phenomenology is a divisive point amongst her readers. Sara Beardsworth argues for "her [Kristeva's] outright dread and rejection of Hegel" (Beardsworth, 2004: 214). Maria Margaroni, in *The Pathos and*

[25] The notions of *Verwerfung* and *Ausstossung* as they are outlined in Freud's essay *Negation* '*Verneinung*' (1923)

Ethos of Thought in Julia Kristeva (2013) argues instead that if Kristeva is critical of the notion of negativity it is rather Kant's notion of negativity that denotes a logical opposition (Margaroni, 2013: 123). I share the later view and in what follows I discuss Kristeva's debt to but also her departure from both Hegel and Freud. In his essay *Negation* Freud illustrates a clear connection between pre-linguistic bodily experiences and the inception of logical judgment, which he argues is: "the origin of an intellectual function from the interplay of the primary instinctual impulses" (Freud, cited in Green, 1925: 261). Affect in Freud, as I discussed earlier, is a type of judgment that he argues is at the origin of the intellectual function. He states that a patient's free association during analysis renders it possible for the content of a repressed image to enter consciousness by means of negation.[26] However, in this moment of expression, only one part of the repression is freed and only the image or idea can enter consciousness. It is only when a patient recognises the truth of the idea or image and accepts it intellectually as his or her own that it can be fully negated. Jean Hyppolite understands this as a two-part process, a 'double-negation' that undoes repression, and links it to Hegel's use of the *Aufhebung*.[27] Significantly, for Freud this 'double negation' not only provides a means of reversing repression and allowing forbidden content to make its way into conscious thought, but it may also be at the inception of the break between affect and symbolic consciousness (or intellect), thus, at the origin of 'logical judgment' or the intellectual function. Negation, then, signifies from its inception the psyche's process of

[26] Here the example discussed in chapter two in relation to *Discourse, Figure* with regard to the dream-work is pertinent. In recounting a dream, the patient asserts that the person in his dream with which he has had a sexual encounter is *not* his mother. Freud argues that this dream image of the mother can make its way into conscious thought. See Freud, *Negation* (1963) pp. 213–16).

[27] The term 'Aufhebung' in Hegel has the contradictory implications of both preserving and changing. In German the verb aufheben means 'to cancel', 'to keep' and 'to pick up'. See Jean Hyppolite, *A Spoken Commentary on Freud's Verneinung* in Jacques Lacan's *Ecrits* (2002).

translating affective content into thought, rendering negation the generator of thought as such in distinction from affectivity.

According to Freud, the earliest form of "judgment" is a continuation of the original process, "by which the ego, in terms of the oldest, oral instinctual impulses, either takes things into itself ("I should like to eat this") or expels them ("I should like to spit this out")" (Miller, 2014: 19). This judgment, as we shall see, is affective in its nature. Freud names this the 'judgment of attribute' as it depends on pleasurable and unpleasurable affective perceptions: 'this is good' or 'this is bad'. The second level of judgment involves an absence rather than a presence of a sensation. This is what Freud calls a "judgment of existence". It illustrates that what emerges from this inside/outside distinction is a differentiation between the representation within the subject and the existence or non-existence of an object outside of it. Hence, intellectual thought depends on the mind's capacity to reproduce a perceived thing in the absence of the external object and independently of whether it is perceived as good or bad. In *Revolution in Poetic Language* Kristeva maintains that her concept of negativity derives from Hegel and yet clarifies that her own notion of 'rejection' does not signify a negation of negation that would result in the restoration of unity. Instead, she connects it with Freud's negation, the bodily origin of which she understands as aligned with the semiotic chora (the unconscious process), which acts as a go-between psychosomatic and linguistic judgment. This is also linked with her notion of abjection (see later). The negativity Kristeva is exploring in this text is the negativity at the heart of aesthetic production, which she characterises as: "a transgression of position, a reversed reactivation of the contradiction that instituted this very position" (Kristeva, 1984: 69). For her, negativity is "the fourth term of the dialectic" since "triplicity is only an appearance in the realm of Understanding" (Kristeva, 1984: 109/113). While she agrees

with Hegel's linking of the real with the conceptual, the objective with the subjective, and that it is both concrete and dynamic, it is only through Freud's notion of the unconscious that Hegel's logic can become materialist. She claims that: '"The logic exposed above will become materialist when, with the help of Freud's discovery, one dares think negativity as the *very movement of heterogeneous matter*, inseparable from its differentiation's symbolic function" (Kristeva, 1984: 113). If Freudian negation introduces the first division between affective experience and conceptual representation, we see that Kristeva gives a crucially important inflection of Hegel, underlining the role of affect in the genesis of thought; this 'materialist' account contrasting with Hegel's idealism. By materialist, therefore, Kristeva means the body and the drives (the materiality of the affective self). She opposes post-Hegelian readings of materiality that eliminate Hegel's concept of negativity (one that inheres both in Subject and Substance) and of conceiving the process of negativity primarily with external material conditions. Kristeva's own interest with the 'object' lies in the materiality of language: its shape, rhythm and sound. Here again, then, we encounter the underlying presence of the affective register in Kristeva's account of subjectivity and of meaning.

Kristeva argues that Hegelian negativity is opposed to negation. She maintains that: 'The notion of negativity which may be thought of as both the cause and the organizing principle of the process, comes from Hegel. The concept of negativity, distinct from that of nothingness and negation, figures as the indissoluble relation between an "ineffable" mobility and its "particular" determination" (Kristeva, 1984: 109). Negativity in Kristeva indicates the process of becoming of the 'subject-in-process' using the double meaning of the French word *procès* to indicate the correlation between the development of the subject and that of the text, since it is constituted as the organising force (driving movement) behind both negation and the negation of the

negation (double negation) without being reducible to either one. Instead she argues that: “negativity is the liquefying and dissolving agent that does not destroy but rather reactivates new organizations” (Kristeva, 1984: 109). She states that negativity lies somewhere between the prelinguistic bodily organisation of drives and the symbolic constitution of signification and the subject; at the crossroads of the biological and symbolic order. Whereas Freud’s analysis of negation stops at the assertion that rejection is at the inception of intellectual judgment, for Kristeva negation is also involved with what she names “a second return of instinctual functioning *within* the symbolic” (Kristeva, 1984: 69). She argues that negativity in poetic language continues to operate within symbolic language even after the thetic position of the subject (in the symbolic order) has been established. Instead of a negation of a negation which is “the explosion of the semiotic within the symbolic”, the operation of negativity is rather “a transgression of position, a reversed reactivation of the contradiction that instituted this very position” (Kristeva, 1984: 69). The contradiction is thus reactivated in the aesthetic judgment and in particular in art and literature. She claims that art, by definition, does not relinquish the thetic even while pulverising it through the negativity of transgression. In the process of creating art and literature the bodily origin of judgment is expressed through rhythm and musical intonation as a semiotic index, which although meaningful, does not represent or signify anything. These can be aural (voice) or visual and are reactivated in poetic or artistic expression, even though the thetic (and therefore the subject position within language) remains in its place. According to Elain Miller: “Another way of thinking of this relationship between language and the body is the return of the repressed under the symbol of negation” (Miller, 2014: 20). As such, for Kristeva, the process that the art-work reveals is one where, “rejection *re*constitutes real objects, ‘creates’ new ones, reinvents the real, and re-symbolizes it” (Kristeva, 1984:

155). In doing so rejection recalls the schizoid regressive position. However, for Kristeva this rejection 'positivizes' the process by means of an affirmation when introducing the process into the signifying sphere. The signifying sphere here finds itself separate, divided and put in process or on trial. Hence there is an important difference to be made between the work of rejection within analysis and the operations of rejection within aesthetic production. We see, therefore, that affect, which negation divided from the concept, 'returns' in the art-work as a positive, transformative dynamic.

Kristeva argues that whereas psychoanalysis (ideally) effects the passage of the repressed into the symbolic function, 'rejection' in art-works, by contrast, '*marks signifying materials* with the repressed' and organises the repressed element in a different way, so as to take up a position that is "*positivized and erotised in a language* that through drive *investment*, is organised into prosody and rhythmic timbres" (Kristeva, 1984: 163). Unlike the Hegelian dialectic that posits an ideational closure that seems to consist in its inability to conceive of negativity as a repetition of ideational unity in itself, the dialectic in poetic language between the semiotic and the symbolic turns the One back upon itself and shatters its unity. The reintroduction of the symbol of negation into poetic language constitutes a "post-symbolic […] hallmarking of the material that remained intact during first symbolization" (Kristeva, 1984: 193). This material expelled by the sign and judgment from first symbolisations is withdrawn from the unconscious and purged into language. Thus, the materiality of what is initially expelled or drawn (out) from the unconscious and into language (and consciousness) is not a form of intellect but rather a form of eroticisation, an investment of drives organised into rhythm and timbre. According to Kristeva, such negativity has a non-subjective origin, since it cannot be located in a singular ego. She writes:

> The semiotic devise constructed by poetic language through the positing of language as a symbolic system constitutes third-degree negativity. It is neither the lack of a 'no' (as in the unconscious), nor a negative formula (a sign of the instituted symbolic function), nor negation-as-denial (symptoms of the neurotic ego idealizing the repressed), but instead a modification of linguistic and logical linearity and ideality, which cannot be located in any ego (Kristeva, 1984: 164).

There are four types of negativity involved here: the first is the affirmation (as negation) involved in psychoanalysis, the no of the unconscious; the second is the negativity and difference inherent to desire and language; the third relates to negation and repression; and finally a fourth negation (a non-symbolised negation) that is neither arrested within the terms of judgment, nor is it predicated as negation in judgment. It does not involve a subject and does not take place within the subject but in the space opened up by love (*agape*) as a site of investments that organises this space. This last form of negation is what she names the semiotic (as index) and involves her notion of abjection. I will come back to this discussion at a later point.

Kristeva argues that: "Poetic rhythm does not constitute the acknowledgment of the unconscious but is instead its expenditure and implementation" (Kristeva, 1984: 164). Negativity recalls the moment of the generation of meaning without, however, being reducible to a specific signification. It recuperates 'lost time' in such a way that any reader or spectator can recognise himself in it. According to Miller:

> This recuperation might be compared to a kind of transference of a painful memory into an intermediary space such that an immediate interiority can be mediately directed toward other people, stabilizing the identity of the artist and of the artwork. The recuperation of lost time might be connected to the idea of a ban on grave images understood in a specific, nonreligious sense (Miller, 2014: 20).

Kristeva argues that within this space, which is corporeal and biological but already social (since it has a link with others), there operates a non-symbolised negativity. This negativity (expenditure) points towards (indicates) some element of language or expression that is ineffable and unrepresentable in symbolic terms. Yet, it is this

negativity itself that provides the condition of possibility for separation which permits language and representation to emerge. She claims that the literary and artistic process is a sublimating gesture of reshaping and reconstructing oneself, a process that also takes place as a 'working through' in psychoanalysis, through mimetic identification and in psychoanalytic terms (through transference and counter-transference) of the analyst and the analysand. Psychoanalysis reveals by invoking love in the analytic relation that love is the force behind the semiotic and the chora. We see here that love and art, both of which are closely articulated in Kristeva's thought with psychoanalytic theory and practice, operate as equivalent, perhaps parallel, ways in which affect enters into the constitution and transformation of both language and the subject. The following section will address the three key terms that, in my reading, formulate the processes of the semiotic chora: loss, abjection and love. I view these three affective processes as correlative to Lyotard's figure-image, figure-form and figure-matrix.

III Art: Loss and Melancholy

The reader will perhaps sense that I am moving towards an account of the importance of Kristeva's notion of love, as a specific dimension and configuration of affectivity. However, before arriving there, I will need to account for the significant role of melancholy (as what indicates displacement or destabilisation) in this picture. This in turn entails an engagement with Kristeva's theory of abjection (restabilisation within the order of language). It is significant to note that whereas Kristeva views writing (poetic language) as what incites affect (the semiotic), it is psychoanalysis that exposes the processes involved in the semiotic chora as processes of love and affect. In *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Kristeva argues that the ban on graven or unrepresentable images concerns purification rites in religious and literary discourse.

She views the link between the sacred and sacrifice as an issue that arises in psychoanalysis and notices the lack of discussion on the second of Freud's two taboos of totemism: murder and incest.[28] She argues that the sacred is two-sided. On the one hand, it is founded on murder and the social bond and on the other hand, by incest:

> […] Another aspect like a lining, more secret still and invisible, non-representable, oriented toward those uncertain spaces of unstable identity, toward the fragility – both threatening and fusional – of the archaic dyad, toward the non-separation of the subject/object, on which language has no hold but one woven of fright and repulsion (Kristeva, 1982: 58).

The mother-child bond, or the archaic dyad prior to the Oedipal crisis, that finds separation (between the subject object position) in the acquisition of language is the same archaic bond at the origin of the semiotic chora. In *Powers of Horror* Kristeva calls this pre-verbal and pre-symbolic lining "a beginning" preceding the word (Kristeva, 1982: 61). She returns to the concept of negation and argues that this beginning where no clear distinction can be made between inside and outside is the introduction (the very beginning) of language. Abjection fundamentally refers to processes of expulsion that are necessary in order to establish the borders between the 'I' and the other. We may recognise again the moment of negation discussed above. In particular, the fourth type of negation that relates to the affect (index) and the processes of displacement/condensation or destabilisation/stabilisation.

[28] She argues in *Powers of Horror* that: "There would be a beginning preceding the word. Freud, echoing Goethe, says so at the end of *Totem and Taboo*: "In the beginning was the deed." In that anteriority to language, the outside is elaborated by means of a projection from within, of which the only experience we have is one of pleasure and pain. An outside in the image of the inside, and outside would thus be unnameable, a border passable in both directions of pleasure and pain" (Kristeva, 1982: 61). The sacred is what Kristeva understands as the "zero degree" of meaning. She argues in *The Feminine and the Sacred* (2001) that: "That life, desired and governed by a loving mother, is not a biological process pure and simple: I am speaking of the meaning of life – of a life that has meaning. We stand here at the 'zero degree' of meaning, to borrow the expression of Barthes, whose irony and love philosophy I have not forgotten. What if what we call the 'sacred' were the celebration of a mystery, the mystery of the emergence of meaning?" (Clément and Kristeva, 2001: 13).

Abject phenomena reveal the tenuous and fragile borders of the 'I' and demonstrate the intellect's inability to harness abjection within the subject/object relation. Kristeva's abject is a sign for a non-object on the edges of primal repression. Abjection is an archaic process that emerges from the infant's relation to the mother (even before birth) where biological processes are at work. These processes constitute the conditions for the child's separation from the mother. She describes the abject as "the most fragile (from a synchronic point of view), the most archaic (from a diachronic one) sublimation of an "object" still inseparable from the drives" (Kristeva, 1982: 12). Abjection resists the coherent and unifying characteristics of signification. She claims that abjection is "a vortex of summons and repulsions" that maintain the border between life and death, chaos and order, a boundary that must be established in order for a subject or an ego to emerge. Its objects are borderline: vomit, blood, dead bodies etc. and they simultaneously threaten, as well as constitute the self's boundaries and borders. Kristeva writes that: "abjection [is] what disturbs identity, system and order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite' (Kristeva, 1982: 4). Implicated in drive-ridden processes, abjection is a functioning that is pre-oedipal and pre-imaginary, although it prevails throughout adulthood. Kristeva builds up the notion of abjection as both positive and negative. It signals both a disruption of, but also the constitution of, subject and meaning. She argues that in abjection, "I expel *myself*, I spit *myself* out, I abject *myself* within the same motion through which "I" claim to establish *myself*" (Kristeva, 1982: 3). Abjection, therefore, is the principle of an archaic organisation that is prior to language but which language relies on for its constitution. Kristeva's account of abjection extends Freud's elaborations of narcissism and its relationship to melancholia and love.

The notion of abjection relates to the process that comes from or after (a primary) loss, as well as, displacement and refers to restabilisation (and rehabilitation of the semiotic) within language. According to Kristeva the gap or bar that emerges in identification does not produce a subject and an object but rather a phallus, which is a mark that is indicative of something that is lacking, divided and abject. And is therefore something other than plenitude and unity with the mother. Hence, abjection can be viewed as expulsion or rejection of the mother, but also a rejection of the chaos prior to the emergence of elementary signifying marks. According to Estelle Barrett:

> This 'rejection' and the notion of abjection cannot be viewed simplistically. In rejecting the mother, the child is also rejecting part of itself. In terms of the more archaic separation, abjection is also implicated in maintaining the border between the child and the womb – a place of plenitude and comfort that must eventually be jettisoned in order for the child to live (Barrett, 2011: 70–71).

There is always a pull towards this prior state and therefore abjection prevails as a lining of consciousness, and as a fearful drive towards a state of non-differentiation. Abjection throughout life is prevalent as a process of attraction and repulsion necessary for the performative production of language to occur and as a consequence, for any erotic object (or object of desire) to emerge. This is precisely why abjection is implicated in artistic production and melancholia. Melancholia denotes an inadequate separation, where the melancholic has internalised the maternal object while artistic production is the struggle to overcome this condition through the expansion of symbolic capability. Abjection therefore indicates the loss of the maternal object and the subject's destabilisation in the encounter with affect. Affect for Freud is first and foremost a displacement (as mentioned in Chapter One).

Kristeva argues in *Black Sun* that melancholia is an 'impossible mourning for the maternal object' (Kristeva, 1989: 9). Her theorisation of the subject as a continuum between bodily processes and language leads her to suggest that it is not essential to

establish a distinction between melancholia and depression. Instead, she takes what is common to both: the intolerance for object loss and the signifier's failure.[29] Whereas melancholia is usually understood as something that relates to internal trauma (that manifests itself as anxiety), mourning relates to conditions which emerge as external events in an individual's life. Kristeva argues that the blurring of boundaries between biological and mental states can be seen in mourning subjects (who often suffer from physiological symptoms, inasmuch as melancholia). What then is the relationship between love, melancholia and art? Melancholia, according to Kristeva, drawing on Melanie Klein, is "the sombre lining of amatory passion' and the child must undergo depression in order to attain language" (Kristeva, 1989: 5). However, once this has been effectuated, the loss causes her to desperately seek the mother again: "first in the imagination, then in words" (Kristeva, 1989: 6). She claims that the infant's separation from the mother can be overcome if she is partially recovered through language. She argues that primary inscription of loss results in emptiness and the child's parting with sadness. Melancholy, then, indicates the encounter with affect that displaces the subject and his language (and linguistic positions) while love (agape) is the force of the semiotic chora that recuperates this loss back into language (through abjection) and re-stabilises the subject. This is a creative process that incites new thoughts, new language and new art-work.

Aesthetic and in particular literary creation can provide a therapeutic device that is "closer to a catharsis than to elaboration" (Kristeva, 1989: 24). The emotions that

[29] Kristeva argues in *Black Sun* that: "If temporary sadness or mourning on the one hand, and melancholy stupor on the other are clinically and nosologically different they are nevertheless supported by intolerance for object loss and the signifier's failure to insure a compensating way out of the states of withdrawal in which the subject takes refuge to the point of inaction (pretending to be dead) or even suicide. Thus, I shall speak of depression and melancholia without always distinguishing the particularities of the two ailments but keeping in mind their common structure" (Kristeva, 1989: 10–11).

arise from affective responses relate to energy disruptions and the movement of drives and are not merely raw energies. The energy disruptions and the affective responses that they engender give rise to mood. She argues that:

> Mood is a generalised transference (E. Jacobson) that stamps the *entire* behaviour and all the sign systems (from motor functions to speech production and idealization) without either identifying with them or disorganising them. We are justified in believing that an archaic energy signal is involved, a phylogenetic inheritance, which within the psychic space of the human being, is immediately assumed by verbal representation and consciousness (Kristeva, 1989: 21).

The archaic energy signal or chora is not related to what Freud called 'bonded' that lends itself to verbalisation, association and judgment. Rather, representations 'germane to affects' and notably sadness, 'are fluctuating energy cathexis' (Kristeva, 1989: 22). This fluctuating energy cathexis is insufficiently stabilised to coalesce as verbal signs and is acted upon by primary processes (displacement / condensation) that are in turn dependent on the agency of the ego. Mood can thus be viewed in terms of intensity (sensation) and as a type of language: "moods are inscriptions, energy disruptions, and not simply raw energies" (Kristeva, 1989: 22). They lead towards the modality of inscription that Kristeva calls *signifiance*, which is not symbolic, but is necessary for connection and identification with others to occur. The simultaneous negation of the mother (the primary object) and acceptance of loss is rendered possible by the child's ability to use language. When pain and the anguish of loss are symbolised there is at least a partial recovery of the mother through words. Kristeva's use of *denegation* (the denial of negation) illustrates the relationship between love and melancholia. She states:

> Signs are arbitrary because language starts with negation of loss, along with the depression occasioned by mourning. 'I have lost an essential object that happens to be, in the final analysis, my mother' is what the speaking being seems to be saying. 'But no, I have found her again in signs, or rather since I consent to lose her I have not lost her (that is the negation), I can recover her in language' (Kristeva, 1989: 43).

Hence, denegation implies both a negation and a disavowal of the mother (I have lost her). However, it is also an implicit affirmation ('I can reconnect with her through language'). Kristeva illustrates then that language is constituted by both affective (images) and symbolic elements. And the source of this affirmation is the image of the mother's love that is released into language as affect (as the semiotic). The dimension of language that is occupied by affect, then, is viewed as an assurance of some form of consolation that is available through words.

Kristeva turns to a Kleinian model of psychoanalysis in order to demonstrate that the depressive position arises from language acquisition (the child's learning language) as a means to try and rediscover the lost mother from whom s/he has been separated through weaning and maturation. *Signifiance* lies at the threshold between body (energy, drives) on the one hand, and text on the other hand, ensuring the preconditions and/or manifesting the disintegration of the imaginary and the symbolic. Literary creation transforms the affect into rhythms, signs and forms that are both melancholic and which speak. Kristeva argues that:

> Literary creation is that adventure of the body and signs that bears witness to the affect – to sadness as imprint of separation and beginning of the symbol's sway; the joy as imprint of the triumph that settles me in the universe of artifice and symbol, which I try to harmonise in the best possible way, with my experience of reality. But the testimony is produced by literary creation in a material that is totally different from what constitutes mood. It transposes affect into rhythms, signs and forms. The 'semiotic' and the 'symbolic' become the imprints of an affective reality, perceptible to the reader […] (Kristeva, 1989:22).

Hence Kristeva, (like Lyotard and Deleuze) distinguishes between the reader and the writer, by placing a different emphasis on each; the writer 'bears witness to the affect' whereas the reader 'affirms' the affect. She argues that art is a new kind of language, or a 'language beyond language', which secures for the artist a sublimatory hold over the lost 'Thing'. This lost 'real' (the Thing), or lost mother (the archaic motility she calls the chora), lost when the child enters into symbolic life, is also the beyond of

signification, and although it cannot be imagined it is always sought after. When entering language, the semiotic substratum is covered over, although it does not disappear altogether. Rather, in poetic language these energy charges reappear through non-signifying linguistic modes such as rhythm, alliteration, assonance, and timbre. However this is effected only in the form of a 'second degree thetic', and therefore, only indirectly and through the medium of the symbolic (that obscures it): "a resumption of the functioning characteristic of the semiotic chora within the signifying devise of language" (Kristeva, 1984: 50). The "second degree thetic" is the abjected affect-index that is a remainder of the (semiotic chora) within language. This ensures that the semiotic chora is beyond language and that there is 'a resumption of the functioning characteristic of the semiotic chora within the signifying devise of language' (Kristeva, 1984: 50). It is precisely this characteristic of the semiotic that explains the (continued) transmission of affect; this last stage involves the reader and is what makes the affect circulate. According to Kristeva, this is precisely what artistic practices and notably poetic language demonstrate. Hence an intermediary emerges between the two poles of silence and speech. In *Black Sun* it is artists such as Fyodor Dostoevsky and Hans Holbein who, having suffered from depression, emerge from it by moving toward signification. However, Kristeva argues that this movement towards signification should not be understood as a commitment to it or being fully re-absorbed into it. Rather, they illustrate that despite the 'cure' they nevertheless refuse to commit fully to the determinate order of law and language. For Kristeva, all love is an impossible attempt to return to the mother through the acquired paternal mode of language. She argues that: "If there is no writing other than the amorous, there is no imagination that is not, overtly or secretly, melancholy" (Kristeva, 1989: 6). Thus Kristeva ultimately posits creative art and poetic language under the sign of love, and thus, significantly for the purposes of

my argument, under the sign of affectivity. In what follows I will be looking at the notion of love in Kristeva alongside her notion of the semiotic chora and love (agape) as the organising principle of affect as process.

IV Love and Subjectivity

In the opening chapter of *Tales of Love* titled 'In Praise of Love' Kristeva begins by claiming that the memories of her own personal encounters with love leave her inarticulate. In confronting the lover's discourse she finds that language is neither capable of defining love, nor is it able to articulate it in the same way that she has experienced it. Love marks the distinction between the immediacy of felt (affective) experience and signification that is not capable of capturing it in its singularity. Love then reveals the difference between the semiotic and the symbolic by revealing a gap between (immediate) affective experience and language's belated response. The discourse of love, she argues, can only be expressed in the past tense or "*after the fact"* and only from the site of the first person: "As it is singular, I accept it only in the first person" (Kristeva, 1987: 1). She equates the discourse of love to the poetic language of literature. According to Kristeva, we can only approach the language of love by writing it allusively, in metaphors, by likening it to something *other*. She claims that:

> No matter how far my love memories go I find it difficult to talk about them. They relate to an exaltation beyond eroticism that is as much inordinate happiness as it is pure suffering; both turn words into passion. The language of love is impossible, inadequate, immediately allusive when one would like it to be most straightforward; it is a flight of metaphors – it is literature (Kristeva, 1987: 1).

Although love's poetic expression can only be captured through the signifying system of language, literature provides the metaphorical and connotative form as a device by which to approach it obliquely. Trying to make sense of her own memories of love in a

language that cannot accommodate the highly semiotic experience of love within its own discourse, without displacing and reducing it, she argues that meaning takes flight, while errors, hallucination and deception become a necessary requirement of *jouissance*. The contradictions and misunderstandings that the love metaphor produces not only disperse meaning but also become the most important figures by which to read a text.

For Kristeva psychoanalysis is a discourse of love insofar as it sketches a kind of philosophy of love and evokes what she names the "ordeal of love". Both identity and meaning are implicated in this process, "for what is psychoanalysis if not an infinite quest for rebirths through the experience of love, which is begun again only to be displaced, renewed, and, if not abreacted, at least collected and set up at the heart of the analysand's ulterior life as an auspicious condition for his perpetual renewal?" (Kristeva, 1987: 1). Analysis, she argues, is neither a detached and subdued writing of the love life of individuals, nor is it a complete, or objective, history of ideas on love. Rather, she argues that analysis is an integral part of it; the analyst is within love from the start and is unable to perform analysis otherwise. She argues accordingly that psychoanalysis evokes love. Psychoanalysis reveals love as both an affliction and a process; its emergence arises in the experience of the psychoanalytic session through transference (and counter-transference) and the psychoanalyst is capable of capturing "selections, insights and symptoms" (Kristeva, 1987: 12). In other words, she argues that the lover's discourse reveals itself in figure-fragments, not unlike those evoked by Roland Barthes in *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* (1977). According to Kristeva, affective displacement and the force of love incite and produce linguistic structures, which is the process of the semiotic chora. Love, she claims, is a figure of affliction, a traumatic wound that only the suffering body bears witness to as an experience of rupture. Her own role as both analyst and lover illustrates this rupture.

According to Kristeva, psychoanalysis places narcissism and not the libido as the dominant element of the psyche. In *Tales of Love* Kristeva focuses on the notion of narcissism that Freud describes as "the primary love relationship between oneself and the image of oneself" (Keltner, 2011: 31). Freud characterised narcissism as the withdrawal of the libido from objects (or object cathexis) toward the ego. For him, narcissism is essential for the formation of an ego, since the subject is structurally unified by the identification of itself with an image. Narcissism constitutes the primordial separation of the mother-child dyad by unifying the ego. Lacan later establishes this stage of subject constitution as the "mirror stage". In *Tales of Love* Kristeva draws on Freud's earlier theory of primary narcissism (like Lyotard) in order to explain the possibility of an identification that occurs prior to the formation of the ego, and the incorporation of an image (without an object) that has been provided by an other. Kristeva's account of narcissism in *Tales of Love* is described as a pre-symbolic matrix. She argues that 'Freud had discovered the *symptom* as metaphor, that is, condensation, of fantasy. Now, and thanks to Lacan, one analyses the symptom as a screen through which one detects the workings of *signifiance* (the process of formation and deformation of meaning and the subject)' (Kristeva, 1987: 23). Whereas Lacan's understanding of narcissism presupposes a flat image, or 'a screen over emptiness […] at the root of the human psyche', she argues that because the arbitrariness of the Saussurian sign places us in front of a bar, or an emptiness, that constitutes the referent/signified/signifier relationship, Lacan is unable to "see past the visible aspect; the gaping hole of the mirror stage" (Kristeva, 1987: 23). She argues that in contrast to Freud's image (as condensation), which contains depth, Lacan understands the image from the standpoint of representation. She argues instead that given the uneasy, uncertain ubiquity and inconsistency of narcissism in Freud, we can conceive

narcissism against the background of linguistic theory as a primary emptiness "that appears as the first separation between what is not yet *Ego* and what is not yet an *object*" (Kristeva, 1987: 24). Hence, the separation that Kristeva is referring to has already occurred prior to the symbolic and prior to the Lacanian 'mirror stage'. She claims that narcissism both protects emptiness and causes it to exist and thus, as the 'lining of that emptiness', her account ensures an elementary separation which is maternal (semiotic) and opposed to the symbolic (paternal or masculine libido). Without the solidarity between emptiness and narcissism, chaos "would sweep away any possibility of distinction, trace and symbolization which would in turn confuse the limits of the body, words, the real, and the symbolic" (Kristeva, 1987: 24). In a similar manner to abjection (where the impact of alterity is experienced as inaugural loss or want of the mother), narcissism surfaces to protect and maintain emptiness. Kristeva outlines her understanding of narcissism both against the Freudian and Lacanian view. She proposes a theory of narcissism that has a triadic structure and which both precedes and conditions the appearance of the ego.

Kelly Oliver claims that "*Tales of Love* deals with identity and idealisation, while *Powers of Horror* deals with negation and violence. Both of these are part of the analytic cure. Both are part of love" (Oliver, 1993: 121). Kristeva argues that love is a combination of "the sublime and the abject making up the pedestal of love, [that] come together in the "flash"' (Kristeva, 1987: 368). Love, then, is a combination of identification with a sublime ideal and a detachment from an other, a process which involves abjection. She reads and develops Freud's love as "reciprocal identification and detachment […] one open system connected to another" (Kristeva, 1987: 14–15). In opposition to Freud, however, who develops only one (male) libido, she argues that amorous discourse requires an interaction between heterogeneous elements. Love, she

points out, requires two, both the self and the other, and only in and through love can the subject cross the boundary of the self and become other. The amorous subject identifies with the other even though s/he remains detached from this other. Kristeva posits a notion of love where identification takes place through difference without abolishing that difference, nor assimilating that difference entirely. She returns to Freud's observation that in order for narcissism to appear something must be added to the mother-child dyad. For Kristeva, narcissism is dependent on a third party that both chronologically and logically precedes ego-formation. She thus turns to Freud's concept of a pre-symbolic 'father of individual prehistory'. In *On Narcissism*, he suggests that the identification through which autoeroticism develops into narcissism must occur in relation to a "father in individual prehistory". According to Kristeva, primary narcissism, *Einfuhlung*, is an identification with a metaphorical 'object'. She argues that amorous identification occurs through primary narcissism, but also that love itself is what makes primary identification possible. This archaic identification she maintains is: "characteristic of the oral phase of the libido's organisation where what I incorporate is what I become, where having amounts to being, is not, truly speaking, objectal, I identify, not with an object, but with what offers itself as a *model*" (Kristeva, 1987: 25). This pattern or model is not an imitation but rather an archaic reduplication which is possible before object choice. Primary narcissism requires an abdication of the ego from judgment; it is objectless and immediate; and opens up to and through this non-objectal third, "the father of individual prehistory".

Primary identification is what sets up the beginnings of ego-formation. At this stage the ego and its correlate are undifferentiated with respect to the subject-object positionality that arises only with oedipal triangulation. Yet Kristeva argues that a "third" is necessarily present and it is the condition for the "one". In other words,

emptiness emerges in the perceived absence of the mother, predominantly because of her symbolic capacity that psychoanalysis understands as the mother's desire being elsewhere or for the father's phallus. The archaic unity of the imaginary father is described by Kristeva, as the: "coagulation of mother and her desire". (Kristeva, 1987: 41) The image of the maternal figure is therefore always both loving and desiring. Kristeva takes this "primary father" from Freud, and Lacan's notion of the metaphor, as the two primary modes of functioning of the unconscious, both of which relate to love (*agape*). In *Tales of Love*, Kristeva treats the issue of images through psychoanalysis and the figure of Narcissus. She breaks with the notion of the image as correlative to representation, the image viewed as an internal representation of an external reality. Rather she posits, like Lyotard and Deleuze, that the image is what is capable of holding on to affective difference. Metaphors create images that hold on to affect as difference through primary identification and its constitutive leap.

Kristeva links metonymy to desire and language, and metaphor to love and affect. The former is the organising principle of the ego/I and the latter of the unconscious and the drives. The subject oscillates between the two. Metonymy is a process in language whereby a concept is expressed in terms of another concept related to it by its necessity. Metonymic desire refers to the rejection / expulsion of desire in the social context. Metaphor (from Greek meta-pherein) which means "to transfer", "to carry" or "bear beyond" is of interest to Kristeva insofar as it comes from the same root as "to bear children" or "to give birth to". It is also linked etymologically to "transgress" (to step across). Transgression, metaphor and the maternal are all related to the relationship between the subject/object and the crossing of each others boundaries. She argues "Let us call metaphor, in the general sense of *a conveyance of meaning,* the economy that modifies language when subject and object of the utterance act muddle

their borders." (Kristeva, 1987: 268) What concerns her in the notion of metaphor is the problematic relation between image and resemblance. What one loves is an ideal image that is out of sight but present in the memory. The amatory economy thus presupposes a separation or distance between the subject and object. She argues that "The entire notion of metaphorical conveyance is already present in the omoiosis relation, which has the advantage, at the very dawn of Greek thought, of placing love in concert with image-making, resemblance, homologation." (Kristeva, 1987: 269) It is Aristotle who reframes metaphor as *analogia* that makes the state of shock inherent in amatory omoiosis and the metaphor thinkable. She argues that he salvages analogy by opening up the question of "being as act" and at the same time raising the problem, if only implicitly, of the act of naming: "The metaphor signifies things in action". (Kristeva, 1987: 271) She argues however, that while Aristotle provides us with a way of thinking about the metaphor as analogy, the metaphor itself is split between "imitation" (representation) and a poetic metaphor that escapes representation and exceeds it as a "surplus of meaning" and moves away from the metaphysics of the image. It is the "like" of metaphorical conveyance that both assumes and disrupts the constraint of discourse, to the extent that it "probabilizes" the identity of signs and questions the very probability of the reference.

Kristeva turns to Freud's analysis of metaphor and metonymy in *The Interpretation of Dreams* to account for unconscious processes or images that are not visible but underlie discourse nonetheless. Kristeva claims that the metaphor has undergone a myriad of transformations. Lacan in his account of the unconscious revises the grammatical figures of condensation and displacement according to the structural figures of metaphor and metonymy. While Freud described the metaphor as a container, Lacan reinterprets it as a screen (through which the workings of signifiance can be detected). Kristeva in *Tales of Love* rethinks the metaphor as a primary component of

amatory discourse, that is, as an internalised, resonant, condensed transfer of meaning from one site of affect (the body) to another (a text). She privileges literature as the creative space where meaning is elaborated, destroyed, eluded and reviewed by way of the transformative effects of metaphor. She asserts that "we are all subjects of the metaphor" by which she means that we are all subjects in and of love. (Kristeva, 1987: 279) She argues that "literature seems to me as the privileged place where meaning is elaborated and destroyed, where it slips away when one might think that it is being renewed. Such is the metaphor's effect. Likewise the literary experience stands revealed as an essential amorous experience, unstabilizing the same through identification with the other" (Kristeva, 1987: 279). Today, she argues, literature is both the "source" of mystical renewal, to the extent that it provides new amatory spaces and the intrinsic negation of language (to the extent that the only faith literature conveys is the assurance, that is painful just the same, of its own performance as supreme authority. She argues that we are, "in love with our own productions, under empty skies" (Kristeva, 1987: 279). Kristeva's account of love thus binds together many of the elements of her previous work on the semiotic, poetic language, negativity, abjection and melancholia, in a philosophy which emphasises the importance of affect in the formation, transformation and persistence of the subject.

Conclusions

Affect theory in Jean-François Lyotard, Gilles Deleuze and Julia Kristeva emerges in the wake of May 1968 and its emphasis on what makes change possible is fitting to the political climate of the 1960s. Their focus is on the processes and circumstances under which change, especially in consciousness, can occur. In contrast to their predecessors they are less interested in the structures of language and more intrigued by the mechanics of what produces these structures and linguistic capabilities. The notion of affect in its particular historical development and guises offers a way into this question. As we have seen, all three, despite their different sources of influence, depict art as exposing the processes of affect and the visual as that which make language appear. Affect theory therefore illustrates a departure from what already exists to what enables the possibility of change. These writers are thus interested, as we have seen, in what comes before phenomena such as structures (and signification). I have argued that they share a common definition of affect; that affect can be considered as the non-linguistic element of an image (or representation) that forms a productive relationship with signifying elements of language that is productive and creative of art, language and subjectivity. This definition of affect has shown it to be two-fold. I have proposed that affect can be defined as both an index (within language) and a process (outside and autonomous in relation to language). The figural in Lyotard and Deleuze, as well as the semiotic chora in Kristeva can be viewed in terms of affect as process. This process entails a critical function of seeing and a mode of understanding prior to perception, language and conscious thought processing. The notion of affect thereby enables them to develop a very different understanding of the concept of interpretation that impacts their aesthetic as well as their literary theories. The ‘sense’ in affect does

not refer to language or referential meaning. Rather these writers illustrate that whatever has surfaced in consciousness has already undergone a process of interpretation. In other words, all three argue that affect is a type of judgment and primarily a negative one, what they frequently articulate as resistance, as dissensus, as destabilization or as displacement. Hence the encounter with an unconscious affective event is not empty of content, rather unconscious affective images are types of (non-referential) ideas that are at odds with one's own current thought and with linguistic ideologies. Affect therefore establishes a mode of communication outside the parameters of language and in an intimate relation with images. Images themselves are therefore no longer understood as mere representations. The gesture of affect is correlative to the image and the visual prior to linguistic capabilities. These unconscious affective images are significant experiences that impact not only the individuals that they affect but can have significant effects in the social and political realm. The body here, as in affect theories of the past, is intelligent and sentient in its interaction with the world. The body forms unconscious thought processes that are significant because they engender linguistic capabilities and new thoughts as well as new and creative art-works. This is why I have suggested that affect is what incites language (cognitive thought processes) and creativity and we can add here that this begins with a gesture of rejection. Hence, for Lyotard, Deleuze and Kristeva the notion of affect becomes an important means of access to the unconscious and the Real. It provides a way by which to think the self as both active and reactive. In affect theory it is therefore, no longer sufficient to simply pose affect against reason since affect forms the bedrock of cognitive reasoning. In fact, the two form an interdependent and reciprocal relationship where affect enables, incites and meddles with cognitive functioning and helps to move and change it. These three writers of affect open up the theory of language beyond its linguistic capacity and its structural

formation and provide a view of art that is interactive with the world around it. If art is significant it is precisely because it reveals the operations of unconscious affective processes that might otherwise be lost in the immediacy of experience.

Interestingly, affect theory in Kristeva, Lyotard and Deleuze as I have shown does not arise as a reaction against Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of language as is often claimed. Both the affective turn and the linguistic turn are thought to emerge as a reaction to Saussure's linguistic theory. What I have found through this work on affect, is not only that these three writer's work remains engaged with problems of language. More than that, their own notions of affect and their redefinition of language as a heterogeneity, arrive from re-reading and revising Saussure's theory of language as a whole, instead of emphasising the theory of *langue*. They show through different arguments and by engaging with his different works that Saussure had discovered not just language as structure but also language's becoming by arguing that it is doubly constituted. They claim that his work posits a phenomenological strand that implies depth that impacts their own notions of affect and elicits a rigorous questioning of the nature of perception, beyond what we perceive in consciousness. As we have seen, this insight has been particularly important to Kristeva and Lyotard who, in order to explain and extend his work, move into Freudian psychoanalysis. The conceptualisation of affect in Freudian psychoanalysis together with Saussure's notion of language as doubly constituted forms the basis of both these writers' work on affect. However, neither Lyotard's nor Kristeva's own work on the notion of affect has yet to receive the acknowledgment that it deserves. Both writers are thought instead to be leading figures of the "linguistic turn" and post-structuralist discourse. The fact that all three writers of my thesis are just as interested in treating affect as much as language (including Deleuze), illustrates that there is an overlap and a blurring of boundaries between the

generally accepted movements that constitute recent French thought. This thesis therefore provides the possibility of viewing a different genealogy of French critical theory in post-war France.

Another dominant figure in the 'linguistic turn' who has been linked to affect theory is Roland Barthes. His work in the early 1970s is said to have shifted from his theoretical work on structure to study elusive affective meaning. Hence future research and further enquiry into the affective turn during this period in French theory may include Barthes' work on "The Third Meaning" (1971), *A Lover's Discourse* (1977), *The Grain of the Voice* (1968) and *Camera Lucida* (1980). His work in the early 1970s and thereafter is thought to investigate a number of "other" meanings. In "The Third Meaning" for instance, the notion of the obtuse is an affective term that relates to aspects or points in images, where meaning is sensed (rather than read) and which extends outside (linguistic) meaning; the meaning created by knowledge, information and culture. In *Camera Lucida* the punctum is identified as a differential meaning contrasted to signification and language. The punctum does not depend on linguistic interpretation but bears meaning that is sensed and subjective. His work on love in *A Lover's Discourse*, and his book *The Neutral* (1974) along with his other books and essays mentioned are all worth exploring in light of the affective turn in the early 1970s and alongside the other three writers that I mention here. If his work has not been taken up here, it is due to the fact that Barthes' (especially the work of the 1970s) has already been thought as a thinker of affect to some extent whereas, this thesis has been interested in uncovering the centrality and significance of affect to a body of work (and writers) that has more readily been thought about in terms of language and signification. Affect theory for me remains an exciting field of study that has potential for further research. It is an open and interdisciplinary field of study that has the scope to be

extended and moved in various directions and has already traversed both the humanities and the sciences.

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